THE LATEST FAD

BASIC EDUCATION

By
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RESOLUTIONS PASSED AT THE WARDHA NATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

22nd & 23rd October 1937

1. That in the opinion of this Conference free and compulsory education be provided for seven years on a nation-wide scale.

2. That the medium of instruction be the mother tongue

3. That the Conference endorses the proposal made by Mahatma Gandhi that the process of education throughout this period should centre around some form of manual and productive work, and that all the other abilities to be developed or training to be given should, as far as possible, be integrally related to the central handicraft chosen with due regard to the environment of the child

4. That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teachers.

'Latest fad' for that too in the domain of education! Acharya Kripalani who has spent many years as an educationist has tried to show that this 'fad' has a sound bottom to it

on the train
6-7-'39

M K Gandhi

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

This booklet has grown out of an article I was obliged to write for the magazine of the Talimi Sangh The Secretary of the magazine committee, Shri Asha Devi, asked for a contribution and would take no refusal The plea of work was brushed aside The plea that I was no writer had as little effect. Personally I find nothing more distasteful than to be obliged to undertake a job for which I have not the requisite capacity Writing is not one of the vices I am addicted to I have not the genius for it. I hold that writing like poetry music and painting is one of the fine arts. Words are the most precious material that an artist uses. This fine material must not be handled by those who have not the necessary ability I believe that the best work in writing, as in other arts, can be done by those who have some natural genius for it. It is not something that can be learnt merely by training and education. In my case there is neither natural nor acquired skill.

I suffer from yet another handicap An exile from my native province, I have not learnt the language of the province of my domicile I am therefore obliged to write in the foreign tongue through which I acquired the little education I have. I was not a student of literature nor have I learnt the English language in its native setting I therefore lack the skill to control my material

Yet another difficulty—I have not to write my own thoughts. I have to interpret Gandhiji's ideas. Interpreting the thought of another person is always difficult, especially when the person is living; more so when the thinker is a dynamic and growing personality Ideas can be communicated only through their external form and garb Their finer shades are therefore, often destroyed

by the medium through which they pass. However I believe that if nature has not made one an original thinker the next best thing for one is to appreciate the great thoughts of others. To have neither of the two capacities is to be doubly unfortunate. I believe I have the latter capacity and I am not ashamed to be a mere follower and an interpreter It is because of this that in spite of many handicaps I succumbed to the insistence and persuasion of Shri Asha Devi.

However I did not know that this was a snare. At one of the meetings of the Talimi Sangh it was announced that I would contribute a brochure to the series to be published by the Sangh. In the meeting of the august I could not contradict the fair one who treated me unfairly So I had to remain silent and somehow to make good what I had never promised.

The following pages are the result of this combination of adverse circumstances. I have been constantly helped by Shri Asha Devi and my companion Shri Suchita Devi. They have gone through these pages and made appropriate suggestions.

Ever since the scheme of Basic Education was announced it has been the special target of some members of the fraternity of the learned Vice-Chancellors of our Universities. I have made no effort to reply to their criticism. I believe they belong to an age which, though it has left some curious specimens, has already passed These worthies are the Rip Van Winkles who went into intellectual slumber in the days of our beloved Queen Victoria of blessed and happy memory Now that their sleep has been rudely and unceremoniously shaken by the mad stirrings of the revolutionary times we live in, they are unable to adjust themselves to the changed

circumstances and consequently get angry To exhume their intellectual bodies for dissection, from the debris of the past, is not my job Therefore wherever I have offered some criticism I have confined myself to the living thought, of today

I must however say that Gandhiji has not yet placed before the country his ideas on higher education beyond saying that those who want the luxury must pay for it and must not oblige the toiling and half starved masses to foot the bill for them. He has merely elaborated a scheme of universal Basic Eduation. Why are our Vice Chancellors angry then? Their preserve of University education, whatever its value in India, is not invaded! It will be time for them to take up cudgels when Gandhiji, who never had the privilege of entering the sacred portals of a University Indian or foreign, presumes to advise the nation on a subject on which, by profession, the Vice Chancellors must be considered as specialists.

In discussing Gandhiji's scheme I have not confined myself to education alone. I have discussed it against the background of Gandhiji's entire philosophy of life. No system of education can be properly appraised and appreciated unless it is studied in connection with the ideas and ideals which it represents. For instance, to understand Soviet education properly it will be necessary to study its background in the Soviet revolution and the Soviet social order Gandhiji's scheme of education can likewise be best understood and appreciated only when studied in its proper setting with the rest of his thought and philosophy I therefore make no apology for the last section of the book, which deals with Gandhiji's socio-political ideas, nor for its length.

ALLAHABAD
October 8, 1938 J B. KRIPALANI

PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

The Hindustani Talimi Sangh propose to bring out a second edition of the book It is now nearly seven years that it was written. Its purpose was to try to show that the priciples laid down by Gandhiji for his new scheme of universal Basic Education were sound and were in consonance with the most approved of, up-to-date and scientific thought, in the educational world. Since the Book was written experiments in the new method have been carried on in some Indian provinces and states The whole course of seven years have not been worked out anywhere, yet sufficient has been done in trying times and under difficult political circumstances, to give the public some idea of the possibilities of the new scheme.

The scheme was introduced by Congress ministries in the provinces under their control in 1939 as an experimental measure. Soon after the Congress ministries had to relinquish office as a protest against the war policy the British Government, followed in India. This naturally made a great deal of difference in the progress of the scheme even as an experimental measure. A scheme associated with the name of Gandhiji and the Congress was not likely to be encouraged under the new political dispensation. That the experiment was not altogether scrapped was due to the fact that the Central Advisory Board on Education of the Government of India had accepted its broad principles Also because some of the provinces were officially committed to its prosecution. The scheme, however could not be worked with the enthusiasm and vigour which alone can ensure success for a new and untried experiment whose very basic principles are not generally accepted or appreciated. A New scheme is like a tender plant which is to be carefully guarded against the hot breeze of active opposition and the cold breeze of indifference Inspite of the handicap of official opposition and indifference the experiment

has been making headway It has, where conscientiously worked, shown results which augur well for its future adoption in a free India.

Inspite of general official apathy and opposition, as the annual report of the Hindusthani Talimi Sangh for the year 1944 records, in the province of Bihar "an earnest attempt is being made to work out systematically the experiment in all its aspects according to the main outlines laid down in the syllabus A seven years programme has been planned and is being worked out faithfully without any uncertainity vacillation or change of policy what have been the results?

We quote a few passages from the report of the Board of Inspectors appointed by the Bihar Government who assessed the results of the work in March 1943.

"The first attention of the Board was given to the study of cleanliness of the children. We were pleased to find that the standard of personal cleanliness in the pupils showed a distinct improvement over that of the previous years. It is probable that there was a special effort in this direction on account of the expected visit.. It was, however evident that due attention was being paid to the personal cleanliness of the pupils as an important part of syllabus, ...and that it has been recognised that the first qualification of a child in Basic school should be that it is a clean child."

We next paid our attention to the general physical development of the pupil. The compact area selected for the experiment is one proverbical for the lethargic habits of the people, and there is everything in the atmosphere of their homes and villages to counteract and very little to help the influence of the schools. Considering all this, we can safely affirm that there is a definite improvement in the physical development and habits of pupils as a result of Basic Education. The children are prompt, active and energetic and their movements in play and work are purposeful and harmonious, they wear their clothes neatly carry themselves straight as compared to the listless children outside school..

"We next tried to find out the effect of the experiment on the intellectual growth of the children This assesment was made from two points of view one attainment in the different subjects of the syllabus and the syllabus as a whole- second-the formation of mental attitudes and habits. .. As regards the first point, an alertness of mind and methodical work were clearly noticeable in the pupils. Their power of observation had also been developed. Their spirit of enquiry however did not seem to have been sufficiently stimulated. We also gave two project of cooperative craft work to groups of children in two basic schools The planning and execution of the plan was satisfactory according to the age and attainment of the children Another test on a larger scale was taken with thirty pupils of grade IV The result of this work was assesed by the pupils themselves and according to their own calculation they has achieved 57 of their own planning.

"We next come to the far more subtle question of what habits and attitudes were being formed in pupils as a natural consequence of craft centred education .. .."

"There is no doubt that standard of personal honesty was slowly rising among the children not only are personal belongings respected but there are instances of things lost being restored by children of one Basic school to another This is a noteworthy fact in an area well known for poverty"

The report further adds

As far as school life is concerned we had ample opportunities of watching the pupils and teachers at work and are satisfied that the school programme is so organised as to give children training in co-operative work and sharing of responsibility"

Independent outside opinions about the experiment as it has worked in Bihar point the same way The Rev Mother Clarisea, Mother Superior Women's College Patna, an educationist writes

"I visited 13 Basic schools in the Champaran compact area ..I was greatly impressed by what I saw The

spontaneous activity displayed by all the students was a surprise to me. The all round development of faculties through the medium of sense training has been a great success Self confidence, self expression, adaptability to changed circumstances were some of the main features of the training. The 3 R s of education were also satisfactorily mastered. There was no cringing fear at our approach, no false shame, but a joyous pleasure in all types of work and labour and a healthy pride in the toil of their hands Co-operative work and readiness to fall in with the ideas and commands of fellow leader were remarkable. I sincerely feel that the salvation of Indian villages and the key to mass literacy lies in Basic educa tion. Give every village a similar school and within a few years the results are bound to speak for themselves."

Evidence of this kind about the experiment carried on in the compact area of the most poverty striken part of Bihar Champaran, is plentiful.

Similar evidence is available from the Kashmir State where the experiment is carried on under the fostering care of the Director of Public Instruction, Professor K. G Saiyidain. He is a keen educationist and knows what he is about.

The Kashmir report reviewing the work of five years (1938–1943) among other things says

" Reports received from the teachers and inspecting officers indicate that the Basic schools have generally found it possible to cover intelligently the prescribed syllabus of co-ordinated studies and the standards attained by the children in various grades, in respect of skill in crafts as well as general education, are quite encouraging. Several discerning and well-known edu tionists and other distinguished visitors to Basic schools have borne testimony to the fact that the children who have been educated according to this scheme, have shown far greater mental alertness and educational awareness than pupils of ordinary schools. In some cases, even the more un-obliging pupils have progressed beyond the normal standards of efficiency In powers of

expression and arithmetic, these students have, generally speaking, proved superior to those in ordinary schools. Craft work, which is never interpreted narrowly in our Basic schools, has succeeded in stimulating and sustaining their interest to a degree which could not be possible in an atmosphere of purely bookish education During a Labour week Basic school boys have constructed new roads and repaired old ones, cleansed wells, springs, and bowlees and dug out drains for the outlet of household waste water and roof drippings."

'So far as the teachers working in Basic schools ar concerned it may be stated that the new scheme of Basic education is having a healthy reaction on their professional outlook They are on the whole, more active, thought ful and social and more conscious of their responsibilities than before and are trying to bring education into closer relation with life and with the interests of children. Porfessionally they are getting better equipped and reports received in response to a fairly long questionnaire which was recently circulated among the Basic schools have done a fair amount of general and technical reading and have prepared reading material for the use of children to the best of their capacity

The attitude of the public towards this new experi ment in education has ceased to be hostile, or apathetic and it can be safely remarked that the scheme has emerged unscathed out of the controversial stage The Department is constantly receiving representations from various quarters for the conversion of ordinary primary schools into new Basic schools."

Professor Saiyidain in one of his articles on Basic education contributed to the "Tribune of Lahore" in 1944 says

" One interesting by product of the basic experiment has been the gradual infiltration of the ideas of activity method social approach to teaching and craft work in many ordinary Primary schools. I have recently visited several such schools with a roll of about 100 students and two teachers of meagre qualifications in each. But the

teachers had the natural gift of teaching and they were infused with the new ideas And what a pleasure it was to see the boys active, alert and happy occupied in simple forms of craft work, working in the schools garden, staging small dramas, making short speeches, running a Panchayat for settling mutual disputes and deciding common problems. Some of the students themselves take the visitors round explaining what they are doing while the teacher is politely shunted to the background. In the schools I am thinking of all these things were being actually—done it was not window-dressing, which, so happens in some cases—while the whole village whose interest in this new type of school had been quickened, stood by and watched all this activity with admiration. The school had become the centre of the village and the teacher the natural and trusted leader of the parents. Of course, that is so only in a comparatively small number of schools yet, but the great thing is that the tradition of aloofness between the School and Society between Education and Life has been broken, and the new leaven is beginning to work in many expected as well as unexpected forms

These results are due not exclusively but largely-to the spirit and the methodology of Basic Education, *which need no longer be regarded as a fad or complacently tolerated* as an experiment *It has come to stay and it is destined to transform the shape of mass educat o in Ind a*" (Italics ours)

All expert evidence confirms the view experessed by the learned Professor Educationally the experiments has succeeded.

Let us now review the results that have been achieved in the direction of economic self sufficiency which according to Gandhiji is an important principle of the new We must assess it in places where careful craft work has been done under expert guidance. Economic self-sufficiency according to Gandhiji is to cover, from the earnings of craft work done by a class, the salary of the teacher

The annual report of Talimi Sangh for the year 1944 from which we have extensively quoted giving a tab

average earnings per pupil per grade in Sevagram Basic school run directly by the Sangh, where careful records have been made and kept sums up the position thus.

EARNING PER PUPIL
IN
GRADES I TO V FOR TEN MONTHS

July 43 to April 44

(*220 working days*)

	Hours of work	Average earning	Maximum earning
Grade I	2 hours	2—1—0	2—14—0
„ II	2 hrs. 30 mts.	3—7—0	6—10—0
III	2 hrs 30 mts.	5—5—0	8—12—0
„ IV	3 hrs	14—1—0	16—4—0
„ V	3 hrs.	15—1—0	18—9—0

"The implications of these figures can be fully realised if we work them out on the basis of a five grade school with 30 pupils in each grade. The total proceeds from craft work in such a school would be Rs. 1218-12-0- in ten months, or Rs. 121 14-0 per month. Calculating the salary of a Basic school teacher at Rs. 25 -per month, the Basic school is within a very close margin of being "self supporting as in the terms of the resolution of the Wardha Education Conference "That the Conference expects that this system of education will be gradually able to cover the remuneration of the teacher "

Thus the actual results both from the point of view of education and economic self sufficiency conclusively prove that wherever the experiment has been faithfully and carefully worked the results have been satisfactory The expectations of Gandhiji and those who on his initiative have worked the experiment have been fully borne out Gandhiji's Latest Fad is to-day no more a fad but a scientific and practical plan of universal, national education suited to the economic and practical require ments of the country Its universal adoption can only be expected in a free India.

INTRODUCTION OF THE SCHEME

The old man at Segaon periodically shocks the country by placing before it novel and untried schemes. His ideas take the public by surprise. They run counter to past experiance and are not in accord with the usual modes of thought and action. The shock is the greatest to the educated. They with their book learning, degrees and diplomas, naturally feel that they know everything there is to be known about the new schemes The so-called specialists get particularly annoyed. They feel that they at least ought to know all about their special subjects which the old man proposes to dispose of in his novel and cavalier fashion. Even those who consider themselves, revolutionaries get confused. Their revolutionary ideas are scarcely the result of their native genius or personal experience. They are derived as the rest of their knowledge, from books. Not being used to initiate or to think out schemes for themselves, they proceed by analogies. When, therefore, a new idea fails to square with their acquired knowledge they dispose it of, with an uncomplimentary adjective. Gandhiji's ideas meet with this fate at the hands of this class of his critics. The new ideas are styled reactionary and revolutionary medieval, unpractical, faddist, spiritual.

Why this want of understanding on the part of the educated? Is it because Gandhiji's schemes are novel and unpractial or is there any peculiarity in the manner of their announcement and presentation which annoys and irritates people? To me it would appear that it is not so much the matter as the manner of the introduc

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EARNING PER PUPIL
IN
GRADES I TO V FOR TEN MONTHS

July 43 to April 44

([illegible]20 working days)

	Hours of work	Average earning	Maximum earning
Grade I	[illegible] hours	—1—0	2—14—0
„ II	[illegible] hrs. 30 mts.	3— —0	6—10—0
„ III	[illegible] hrs. 30 mts.	5—5—0	8—12—0
„ IV	3 hrs.	14—1[illegible]—0	16—4—0
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The most revolutionary ideas and schemes on which hundreds of experts and philosophers working in the field have written volumes are announced with the briefest of introductions. The introductions often seem to cloud rather than explain Gandhiji's ideas and meaning. Immediately there is a chorus of dissent from friends and opponents. The faithful few wait for further elucidation. This of course comes in due time. But Gandhiji has already taken action, he seems always in a hurry for the practical. He expects not arguments and learned authorities but facts to carry conviction and convert people. To the public the danger however arises from the fact that when Gandhiji has ushered in a plan, it means the Congress and consequently the country must follow.

This brief, and one may say arrogant, handling of important problems that may make or mar some essential and vital department of national life and activity is annoying. It is generally resented. But Gandhiji goes on unruffled, bent upon his objective. However his cryptic explanation slowly penetrates a few brains and touches a sympathetic chord in their not too rigidly hide-bound intellect. Some of these come to his help and give shape to his ideas and clothe them in the classical garb which alone can be understood and appreciated by the educated. Parallels and analogies are discovered. Learned arguments are brought forward to justify and support his novel and revolutionary ideas. Equally learned counter arguments are replied to and rebutted with all the necessary quotations from known and recognized authorities. Experiments are tried by persons of undoubted ability in the particular branch of activity and some sort of working programme chalked out. Some for tangible results are shown holding promise for the future.

The new scheme of education called the Wardha Scheme or Basic Education characteristically announced and vehemently opposed by the learned, is at present undergoing this process of habilitation. The scheme was suddenly heralded with a column and a half of introduction in the Harijan Inevitably the first reception accorded to it was that of protests and repudiations It was said that the scheme was the most impossible of all the impossible schemes ever proposed by Gandhiji. The learned would not look at it. Even the Socialists forgot that it bore a family resemblance to what is being attempted in Russia. The wise demolished it complete either with a derisive smile or with the shrug of the shoulders. Gandhiji was obliged to explain This brought him a few supporters, or had he made some converts in secret before announcing his plan ! The subtle old, scheming Bania ! Anyway a conference of the learned was called It was wisely restricted to those who were serious about the problem of education or was it restricted to make it look fashionable ? The Education Ministers in the provinces were invited. They are of course officially interested in education. The trick of confining the Conference to a few succeeded eminently More people were anxious to attend than the small town of Wardha could conveniently entertain.

The *Conference* was presided over by Gandhiji him self. Its proceedings were businesslike, conducted in Hindustani. Two days sufficed. The general principles, which may mean anything or nothing, were laid down. They were so general that they were quite unexceptionable A committee of the learned was appointed An earnest and educationally respectable president was

Thi was in 193" Now th t particular stage is passed.

discovered. And who could have been more suitable than the modest, yet determined, head of the Jamia Millia who, by his and his colleagues untiring and indefatigable activity and efforts, has produced something out of nothing in Delhi!

The Committee put before the public a reasonably satisfying report in terms that the educated could understand and appreciate. On the basis of this report the Congress was persuaded to commit itself. It passed an inoffensive resolution endorsing the innocent looking principles enunciated by Gandhiji and accepted by the Conference. The resolution was moved by Acharya Narendra Deo He supported the general principles. By this time, the Socialists had realised that the principle of labour in education was not only scientific but was also communistically respectable and formed the main principle of Soviet education. They have yet to learn that the idea of economically paying, creative work must also be accepted if the new scheme is to succeed. Narendra Devji did not wholly approve of the scheme but he generally supported it. The pleasant task of seconding the resolution had been assigned to the present writer I had furnished myself with facts and figures properly schooled by Dr Zakir Husain himself. But Narendra Devji's advocacy was so eloquent, his disagreement so veiled and his speech so well received that I did not like to spoil its effect by an inferior speech in Hindi. I therefore formally seconded the resolution as I have to second many resolutions in my official capacity The resolution was passed unanimously The seal of Congress authority was fixed on the new scheme.

By the resolution, Dr Zakir Husain and Shri Arya Nayakam, with the advice and under the

of Gandhiji, were to take steps to bring into existence an Education Board to work out in a consolidated manner a programme of Basic National Education and to recommend it for acceptance to those who are in control and shape public and private education. The same Board shall have power to frame its own constitution etc

To the scheduled time under Gandhiji's advice a board of experts was appointed. With the exception of Shri Narendra Dev and the present writer who may be branded as a politicians all members of the Board are respectable, and, what is more, educationally respectable The composition of the Committee is such as would satisfy all interests and communities Neither the Muslim League nor the most militant suffragist can have any quarrel with its personnel. The Board met in April last (1938) and appointed several useful sub-committees of experts in each department, sanctioned a modest budget and transacted other miscellaneous but highly useful work

Thus the scheme that was thrown at the nation so abruptly and unceremoniously and which gave it a powerful shock, is in a fair way to prosper and bear fruit. This is how Gandhiji works and succeeds His ideas, novel though they appear when critically examined and analysed, are neither so novel nor so revolutionary as they seem at first sight What is upsetting is the manner of their announcement.

ITS IMPLICATIONS

What are the broad principles of this new scheme? They are that (*i*) all education be woven round a craft (*ii*) the produce of the craft be made economically remunerative so as to defray the recurring cost of education, namely the teachers salary Let us see if these two ideas are, after all, as unpractical and as novel, as they appeared at the time of their announcement.

That the present system of education in India is thoroughly bad is admitted by all. Its defects are legion. It violates all the known principles of good and scientific education. It runs counter to the laws of pedagogy psychology and public hygiene. However it is not our purpose to discuss here the whole of this educational system or its manifold defects. We shall confine our selves merely to its most glaring drawbacks.

The system is formal and as such cut off from all life and reality It is intellectual in the narrow sense of the term It deals in symbols to the neglect of the objects that the symbols signify Things are verbally described and no concrete objects illustrate them. As the medium of instruction is the written word, memory is its chief instrument. The system has little to do with actual facts and practical knowledge. Scientific experiment and laboratory work are conspicuous by their absence. It is passive, descriptive and abstract. It therefore lacks observation and induction. It is also physically lifeless. It provides no healthy activity for the growing child. It cramps him in a class room. It deprives him of fresh air sun and light. The partial knowledge it imparts is therefore neither unified nor integrated. Failing

develop all the faculties of the pupil, specially his will it hampers the growth of his personality In spite of all its show of intellect, it encourages dubious orthodoxies

The result of all this is that the system produces proficient babblers When face to face with life they disappoint all expectations formed in the class room Very often thos who neglect books and are condemned as bad material by the teacher show better results in after life It would appear that the neglect of books makes them rely upon themselves and develop their initiative Thus not only a portion of their brain but their other faculties also grow They often succeed where their betters at school fail. Therefore for a long time, some sort of adjustment has been felt necessary

In certain isolated institutions, mostly privately owned and managed, efforts have been mad to offer some corrective to the theoretical bias of this education These efforts have, however been confined to adding classes in a few handicrafts The underlying idea was to make the pupil a little more practical and to change his attitude to manual work and labour Physical labour had come to be looked down upon as degrading for persons with a minimum of literary training, such was the prejudice that even agricultural or commercial activity was at a discount, compared to the poorly paid work of a village teacher or clerk in a big city This attitud has more or less continu d till today but as some sort of manual work at a handicraft however defec tively taught and learnt, is done by the pupil, the stigma attached to manual labour has progressively diminished.

However what these stray classes in handicrafts failed to achieve in the direction was better done by overproduction of educated labour causing economic

depression and unemployment. Year after year the schools and colleges have kept on adding to the number of those seeking employment, but owing to the peculiar political conditions of the country the demand has remained pretty stationary. This has led to increasing pressure being brought upon schools, to provide some remunerative handicrafts along with purely literary knowledge. There is also a demand for separate technical institutions. Something in both the directions has been done. Nevertheless it is plain that this does not and cannot even partially solve the problem of unemployment. Those who have mechanically learnt an art or a craft for a period or two every day at school, are no match for the hereditary workers apprenticed from childhood to their parents and relatives. The latter produce more and do better work and are content with comparatively less remuneration. They have learnt no expensive habits, either at home or at school. Even then, the progressiv increase of foreign manufactured imports, and the partial development of factory products in India itself, have hardened the economic conditions for the hereditary workers, many of whom have to seek livelihood abroad or work in the cities as hired labourers. How can the educated craftsman be accommodated in this ever shrinking field? It is not possible. The economic and unemployment problems have therefore remained unsolved.

It is against this background that the new scheme of Gandhiji is proposed. Its aim is not merely to make manual work and labour respectabl or to provide a handicraft mechanically learnt for the purpose of livelihood. As for making manual labour respectable Gandhiji and his movement of Satyagraha have done more to take away the stigma attaching to it, than any

one person or any one movement in modern times With his charkha and *Khadi*, his insistence on sacrifice, simplicity and identification with the masses and with his new ideas of hygiene and personal cleanliness independent of the servant, the sweeper and the dhobi Gandhiji has rehabilitated manual labour in its proper place of dignity more effectively than any industrial classes in schools could ever hope to do He therefore needs no educational scheme for this purpose Nor is it the intention of the proposed new type of education merely to ensure economic independence of the pupil by means of a craft mechanically and defectively learnt What is proposed here is something different and revolutionary which, while according proper dignity to labour and ensuring a modest and honest livelihood, goes further and attempts what has rarely been attempted before What Gandhiji proposes is to change the medium of instruction. He seeks to alter the characters and language through which education is imparted and acquired. *It is a change not merely in the curriculum* and the subjects taught but a change in methodology Labour in his scheme does not stand merely for self help or school work. It becomes a unifying and integrating factor It helps to combine intellectual, artistic scientific and physical development of the pupil. Books and the written word are not however dispensed with but they are to be re thought, re-invented and re written by the pupils doing creative work in cooperation with the teacher *and one another* This re thinking, re-creating and re writing is what Gandhiji calls true education Education here follows the natural evolution of the individual and the race the evolution of all knowledge art science philosophy and religion.

MARCH OF CIVILIZATION AND BASIC EDUCATION

In the dawn of human history when man was almost crawling, how did he raise his head and stand erect? How did he by slow degrees come to acquire the characteristics that distinguish him from mere animals? There has been a *double process of education*, by observation and by experiment. He observed and then tried his hand on material nature. Having learnt from its ways he began fashioning things. He used his senses, above all, those marvellous hands of his which shape things so cunningly and delicately. Even as he worked on external nature he acquired some knowledge of its ways and qualities. He requisitioned to his services intuition, imagination and reason. The mechanical devices he invented enabled him to overcome his difficulties and obstacles. From being a plaything of whimsical natural forces he came progressively to dominate them. By slow degrees he discovered rudimentary general laws that governed nature and the process of his work. These laid the foundation of his sciences. From being a mechanical worker he became a scientific worker. The general laws he thus discovered while working with his hands and with his rude tools and machines, were further generalized thus creating philosophy. The most hidden secrets of the universe were now revealed to him.

Having introduced some order in the chaos of original and untamed nature, he naturally turned his gaze on himself. He alone of all animals could fashion and invent. What was he then, as distinct from his surround-

ings animate and inanimate? He turned his gaze inward and discovered the laws that regulate the inner working of his being thus creating psychology the science of his soul and religion. On the other hand having to work alone on nature he discovered that as an individual, he was not equal to the task of the conquest of his surroundings. He therefore had to seek the cooperation of all those who were working in the same field. Slowly he created clans, castes, classes and nations thus introducing civic life and government. He made rules appropriate to a social being who wants to live in amity and cooperation with others. In order to exercise his rights over nature he must so modify them as not to come in conflict and interfere with similar rights of others. Thus he creates his social and political rights, duties, obligations and loyalties, introducing in his personal life and in the life of Society practical and theoretical ethics law and politics

This has been the process by which the wild and violent man of the jungle more or less identified with animals, has tamed, and raised himself and progressively become civilized. Now that he has reached some height he has conveniently forgotten the ladder by which he rose. *Sometimes he tries to remove it, thinking that* his work is done. But is his work really complete? Has he not ever to consolidate his gains and carry on fresh conquests? If so his efforts must again and again involve him in the old process or he is likely to be overtaken by decadence which is clever at *forms and* words but lacks creative thought and activity Such decadence has always been, in history the precursor of the disintegration of a civilization

Now the child as its senses begin to function is the

wild primitive man, the barbarian. He has got to be raised and civilized by education. The present system of education, however takes him to be an animal and treats him as such. In his training he is made to repeat parrot like words and phrases. He repeats them and sooner or later comes to be an expert at such repetition Periodically this little animal is brought to give demonstration before friends and neighbours of his learning and proficiency in the use of words. Successful performance is awarded with appropriate rewards, degrees and diplomas. Then again, like a puppy or a monkey he is taught certain practical tricks. He performs them mechanically without understanding and appreciating the process or the meaning underlying them. That he is not smothered by this process, miscalled education, is no fault of th system. It is due to his being in reality a human being and not an animal He jumps over the educational hurdles placed in his path and gets some kind of knowledge in spite of the handicaps of the system. It is however certain that if the system of his education follows the natural course of evolution of the individual and the race he will be educated better and quicker All his capacities and not his brain alone, will be exercised and consequently strengthened and evolved His eyes, hands, and other senses will be trained. They will be alert. His imagination and his inventive capacity will flower forth in fruitful activity He will not suffer from the various inhibitions and repressions from which he suffers today By doing work with a design he will develop his will and become a unified and integrated personality

Psychologically too, this education is necessary for the growing child. His nature needs a good deal of

physical activity for its expression and unfoldment. His brain can be active only through work and play In orthodox schools the child's restless and exuberant energy finding no useful and appropriate field for manifestation, runs into destructive channels and assumes the form of rowdyism and mischief. His creative energy instead of being trained and guided is punished and repressed and thus allowed to run to waste By the new method the pupils of receptive and passive capacities who in after life prove themselves unequal to the struggle of life in a rough merciless world will be energised and trained to use their other faculties in addition to their memory and their brain. While the active the energetic, the refractory the mischievous and the turbulent, the bad material of the school of today those who are constantly subject to the rebuke and the lash, will under this system of education, come to their own and enrich society with their peculiar gifts. When a handicraft becomes the method, medium and the language of instruction, not only will the child's capacities be brought out, but he will find joy in his work, his school, his companions and teachers, which he lacks today The teacher will no more be the harsh task master that he is, but an elder playmate friend, guide and leader

The natural process of learning and development for humanity has, however been slow and torttuous Knowledge has been gained through trial and failure. Success has not been the rule but the exception. Shall the child in his education undergo the same slow and torttuous process of trial and failure? Shall success come to him only as the final fruit of a series of failures? Can he thus learn much in the few years at his diposal before he enters life and chooses a trade or a profession?

Is he not to take advantage of the accumulated experience and the wisdom of the ages? Nothing of this sort need however happen. He is not called upon by the new system to dispense with his books or his teachers. They are there to guide, regulate, facilitate and expedite his progress in the acquisition of knowledge. The advance need not be slow and tortuous. Rather by the new method, the pace will be quicker than at present. Every step that is taken will be correlated and coordinated with his personal experience, in the getting of which he is the chief and the principal agent. His knowledge will not be confined to results worked out by others. He will learn the processes by which information is gathered and knowledge acquired. Every step is consciously and deliberately taken for the end in view The child is thus directed to discover for himself not only facts but the laws of investigation and thinking. What he thus gains becomes a part of himself. He automatically acquires the habit of scientific thinking.

For instance, if his basic handicraft is cloth-making he will begin by knowing his material, cotton, the *history of its discovery cultivation and spread and the* centres where cotton is grown in the world. He will learn the conditions of weather water and soil under which it is grown. He will know it in comparison with other crops. Thus he will learn a real bit of properly assimilated geography history and agriculture. It will not be necessary for him to memorise mechanically any portion of his knowledge. When he learns carding he also gets a knowledge of the different devices that through human history have been evolved and adopted for cleansing and ginning cotton. Then, spinning gives him an idea of weights and measures and the time

divisions. He gets a knowledge of the various machines that have been invented for the purpose. He learns the mechanics of the machine that he uses. When he learns weaving he again learns the more complicated mechanics of the weaving machine and the history of its evolution At every new process his information increases and is integrated Thus the knowledge acquired becomes a part of his personality With this knowledge his practical capacity and will also develop

PAST EXPERIMENTS—1

So far as Gandhiji is concerned education through manual work or a craft, is an original idea. That he should have come by it independently of former workers and thinkers in the field shows how near he lives to the earth. However in the history of education the idea is neither new nor revolutionary It is not even reactionary as our radical friends first thought. The idea has been advocated often enough and notable efforts have been made in the past to work it out.

It is a recognised principle of psychology that upto the age of 14 or 15 the child has a remarkable capacity *for grasping the concrete. His genius for understanding* abstract ideas and generalisations is strictly limited. Whatever generalisations he makes or understands have to be intimately related to and connected with objective facts. He must, therefore, learn by means of the concrete Merely to stuff his mind with generalisations and abstractions, by means of instruction and textbooks,

is to reverse the order of learning prescribed by child nature and child psychology It is to cripple him Efforts have therefore been made to make his education concrete and thus to conform to child mind and psychology That educationists in India should have failed to recognise this great principle of pedagogy when Gandhiji announced it, only proves that even their theoretical knowledge of the subject in which they are supposed to have specialised, is defective. It will not therefore be out of place to remind them here of what they seem to have forgotten.

In primitive times all education was through observation and work. Life itself required work and physical work at that. Even the upper classes, the priest, the king and the aristocrat could maintain their position only through physical work. In hunting, fishing and agricultural civilizations, when there was no written, not to say printed word, whatever littl knowledge there was, had to be painfully acquired through work and experience. The young learners were more like apprentices than pupils in the modern sense They lived with their teachers in Maths and Ashrams where the entire work for the teacher and the institution was performed by them. Their knowledge was consequently embedded in the real and the concrete. It was linked to objective facts. Even its highest soarings had the touch and the aroma of fresh new-dug soil. Religion that to-day deals with some of the highest abstractions, was itself concrete. All its observances and ceremonies were of a practical nature. Its very yoga was the Karma Yoga—the Yoga of action.

All this was however changed in the medieval ages. By this time religion from being concrete had become a

little more abstract. The priestly class had come to be a separate caste. It had become the repository not only of the religious mysteries but also of all knowledge Every sort of education was in the hands of the clericals It was more or less abstract and therefore confined to words and ideas. This was perhaps natural. The object was to create professional clerks, not in the modern but in the medieval sense of the term. The work of the teacher the priest the medical man, the lawyer and later the politician, in fact all educated work, was done by the Brahmans or the priestly order Education by the priest whether in the East or West is likely to be formal and abstract. Religion deals with some of the highest and most final abstractions of the human mind. Moreover spiritual life especially under ascetic and monastic impulse assigns a subordinate place to objective and concrete reality Life of retirement and contemplation comes to be considered the highest life all other life is mundane and earthly The agriculturist, the craftsman and the labourer work with matter and live a material life. Their lives are therefore mean and low The highest life is that of contemplation. The next in dignity is the soldier's life. In a wild and violent age this was to be expected. Ever then there was always a rivalry between the priestly and the martial classes for supremacy In this rivalry the priest ultimately won in the East and the soldier in the West.

Education imparted under the influence and guidance of the priest concerning itself as it does with abstractions must deal with words to the comparative neglect of things and objects. Despising the joy in material life and its concerns it tends to become serious and even morose. That this was so is amply borne out

from the general tone of literature produced by the priestly orders, and from the disputations carried on in the assemblies of the learned of the time Everything was sought to be proved or disproved by means of words A reference to things and nature could easily terminate a controversy but the custom was to make no such reference and to prove one s propositions by means of definitions, analysis and laws of deductive logic. Some times to the modern mind the old disputations appear childish, puerile and void of any real content or meaning. There is much cleverness in the use of manipulation of words and text torturing, but the whole argument has very little meaning for a practical and a scientifically trained mind. The effort was to make the wrong appear the right reason.

When thought is cut off from its sources in actual facts it is easy to prove or disprove unreal propositions by means of formal logic. The hare however fast can never overtake the tortoise, if the latter once starts with a lead. "There can be no causation, time, space, substance or even external reality "This that we see is *maya*, appearances based upon a subjective idea." "There is no such thing as objective reality "The thing in itself is beyond the pale of knowledge. The ideal alone is the real. God is with or without form The resurrection of Christ was bodily resurrection. The wine and bread in the Eucharist actually turn into flesh and blood. The three of the Trinity whether of the Hindus or Christians are really one and not three. These are some of the simple ideas proved and disproved by means of the method used. By this process know ledge becomes subjective and cut off from its objective bases. A few abstract generalisations and laws

deductive logic may give an appearance of cleverness, but empty knowledge of most of its content. Ultimately such a process is bound to result in barren scholasticism. Such scholasticism in the Medieval ages here and elsewhere smothered all free thought and initiative, and thus retarded the advancement of knowledge. It was however soon clear that if knowledge was to progress it was to be less deductive and subjective and more inductive and objective and above all dynamic and creative.

If this formal and monastic education of the medi val ages escaped partially the utter divorce from objec tive reality it was because in the rural and agricultural civilization, and specially in self regulating and self supporting Maths, monasteries and religious establishments, there was plenty of contact with nature, and physical labour had to be performed for the daily needs of life and the running of institutions These activities did modify education and save it from the worst effects of a purely formal and intellectual training Also with a religious objective, education could not fail to develop the imagination, the emotions, the aesthetic faculties and the will. In the main, however education remained formal and intellectual and therefore comparatively uncreative and barren.

At one time in its development, in ancient Greece too, knowledge had come to be smothered under a like intellectual tyranny It was confined to argument, disputation and dialectics. All knowledge for the Sophist could be deductively acquired from a few definitions and generalizations. Dialectics was therefore the most studiously and carefully cultivated branch of human knowledge. Socrates sought to giv a corrective to this,

by his cry of back to nature and reality But of course the Socrates of the disciples appears only as a super Sophist and a clever dialectician, though it is apparent that his cleverness is due to the fact that he referred things to reality and made free use of induction.

With the Renaissance in Europe there was a protest against this formal and abstract knowledge. More and more emphasis was laid upon objective facts. The exclusive reliance that was placed on deduction was relieved by greater emphasis upon induction, experiment and investigation, All pioneers of modern thought have laid stress upon external nature and a careful and patient study of its ways. Modern science and philosophy are the result of this correlating of knowledge with and checking of results by objective reality It must not however be supposed that the ancients or the medievals relied exclusively upon deduction. They too used induction specially in the earlier and creative period of their growth. The question here is on of emphasis. While the main emphasis was on deduction then, it is on induction now

From Bacon, Montaigne, John Locke, the Encyclopaedists upto the present day philosophers and educationists, it has been one long protest against scholasticism and its divorce from nature and reality The first revolt was naturally in the field of philosophy and science Education was not touched for a long time However it could not escape the scientific spirit. Rousseau, the pioneer and father of the modern science of pedagogics, in his book Emile gives the basic ideas of the new method of education. Institutions embodying his ideas were started in Europe. Experiments on the lines suggested by him and those who followed him.

have been going on there and in America up to the present time.

The basic idea of Rousseau was to follow nature and to treat the child as a child and not as a grown up. "The child has his own ways of saying, of thinking and of feeling; nothing can be more unreasonable for us than to substitute our own ways." What are the ways of the child? Rousseau answers, "Children are first restless and then curious. If nature has wisely made them restless it must be for a purpose. The obvious purpose is that of their growth. To oblige the child then, to sit still in a congested, ill ventilated class-room concentrating attention on the abstract wisdom of the village teacher for a few hours every day under the dread of the lash, is certainly not the way to bring out his latent faculties. It is not the way to give him real and fruitful knowledge. It is not even physically healthy. It is the most effective way of bringing about an atrophy of most of his faculties for a partial development of the brain—partial because the brain cannot fully develop in isolation from other faculties. Its growth can never be healthy or full, unless other faculties too are exercised simultaneously.

Again Rousseau says: "Don't hurt him (the child) by the various sciences but give him a taste of them and the methods for learning them. Let him know nothing because you have told it to him but because he has learnt it for himself. Let him not be taught science but discover it. If you ever substitute authority for reason in his mind he will no longer reason, he will be nothing but the playing of other people's opinion.

The comparative advantages and disadvantages to the child of the new as compared to the old system are

brought out thus, "Instead of making the child to stick to his books if I keep him busy in a workshop his hands will work to the profit of the mind. He will become a philosopher the while he thinks he is only a workman As you take him from shop to shop never let him see any work without putting his own hand to it, nor let him learn without kowing perfectly the reason for any thing that is done or at least everything that he has observed." He must be so trained that the use of his limbs is combined with the use of his brain by means of a handicraft. "He progresses only in proportion to his abilities. Neither mind nor body carries more than it can bear When the understanding assimilates things before they are stored in the memory what he then draws from it is his own. If he were to load his memory without full comprehension he would be exposed to the risk of never drawing anything from it which would be useful to him" In short Rousseau stands for the ideal of naturalness and simplicity in education. He holds that the chief agent in the process is the child himself and that he is not to be coerced either physically or intellec tually He must learn from life and its activities and education must fit him for life.

After Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Herbert Froebel, and a host of other educational reformers and practical teachers down to John Dewey and the present bolshevik reformers of Russia, have all in one way or another advocated the idea that instruction and book knowledge can best be imparted and assimilated and the child s capacities made to develop through practical work done by him in the school

According to Pestalozzi, education is the organic development of the individual—mental, moral and

physical. This development comes through activities initiated by the general desire for action and consequent experience. Therefore objects and not words sense perception and not memory must form the basis of his education. Teaching should not aim at dogmatic exhortation but at the development of personality and individuality. He writes, "Nature develops all the forces of humanity by exercising them, they increase by use. The exercise of a man's faculties and talents to be profitable must follow the course laid down by nature for the education of humanity. This is why the man who in simplicity and innocence exercises his forces and faculties with order calmness and steady application is naturally linked to true human nature; whereas he who stifles the order of nature and thus breaks due connection between the different branches of his knowledge, destroys in himself not only the true basis of knowledge but the very end of such a basis and becomes incapable of appreciating the advantages of truth.

Speaking of children in their early years he says: Their power and experience are greater at this age, but our unpsychological schools are essentially only artificial stifling machines for destroying all the results of the power and experience that nature herself brings to life in them. We have children upto 5th year in full enjoyment of nature. We let every impression of nature work on them, they feel their power. They already know full well the joy of unrestrained liberty and all its charms. The free natural bent, which a sensuous happy wild thing takes in his development, has in them already taken its most decided direction and after they had enjoyed this happiness of sensuous knowledge for full five years, we make all nature round them vanish from their eyes;

tyrannically stop the delightful course of their unrestrained freedom pen them up like sheep whole flocks huddled together in stinking rooms pitilessly chain them for hours, days, weeks, months, years to the contemplation of unnatural and unattractive letters and contrasted with their former condition to a maddening course of life."

After Pestalozzi, Froebel carried further the objective method in education. He elaborated the conception of child psychology and his tendency to activity These, according to him, should form the starting point of education. He also developed the conception that education can best be imparted through sense perception, plain constructive work nature study and kindergarten. All of these principles are now recognized by modern educationalists. In India, however they are respected more in theory than in practice

Talking about constructive work with which we are concerned here, Froebel says, The spirit of the man should hover over the shapeless and move it, that it may take shape and form and a distinct being and life of its own. This is the high meaning and deep significance, the great purpose of work and industry of productive and creative activity We become truly God like in diligence and industry in working and doing which are accompanied by the clear perception or even by the vaguest feeling that thereby we represent the inner in the outer that we give body to spirit and form to thought, that we render visible the invisible.

Again he says "The time has now come to exalt all work in free activity; that is, to make it intelligent action This can only take place when the law according to which all formative activity proceeds is recognised and consciously applied as it has been hitherto unconsciously applied

The occupation material of my method gives the means of unconscious application of the law on the child's part to rise to art in such a way as to come to their consciousness by degrees and be recognised as the guide and regulator of all formation. In no other way can human work be transformed into free activity. It can only become intellectual action out of what has been mere mechanical action, when the occupation of the hand is at the same time the occupation of the mind. At the present time art alone can truly be called free activity but every human work corresponds more or less with creative activity and this is necessary in order to make man the image of his Divine Creator—a creator of his own part in miniature.

These new ideas in education through sense perception and constructive work not only made education scientific and fruitful, but made possible what had never been attempted before, namely the education of the defective, the dumb the deaf and the blind. Craft work gave the defective, economic independence and with it self respect and self reliance. It also made possible the reclamation of the juvenile delinquent by means of education.

PAST EXPERIMENTS—II

The reformers in the field of education have not been mere philosophers concerned with educational theory. Many of them have thought of education in terms of social and political reform and have made

experiments and founded and run institutions. They belong to different schools of thought, believing in different ideologies. Some approach education from the view-point of the spiritual destiny of the individual and the race. Some are materialists and socialists. They think of education from the view point of the proletariat and the establishment of a classless society by means of a revolution. While others without subscribing to any particular philosophy and without intending to revolutionise the basis of the present order merely want to make education scientific and more in accord with the laws of child and adolescent nature and psychology. Their aim is to make the acquisition, the spread and the advancement of knowledge, more efficient, natural and fruitful. To whatever school of thought or philosophy the different educational reformers may belong, they are all agreed on making education more concrete and real and less verbal and dogmatic. They all advocate methods of experiment and trial. They emphasise the value of practical and creative activity whether in the laboratory or in the workshop

A Roman Catholic writer in Germany aiming evidently at making education more effective from the spiritual point of view writes, "As with each day we understand more and more clearly what a labour school is we come to realise that for us to oppose this reform would be madness. Each epoch arranges the materials of civilization into new patterns The present epoch asks that religion be related to life, that religion be related to labour that religion be related to study of the nativ land. Our experiment must bring us education through labour and to the native regional school." We have here some aspects of lif which Catholic teachers had

neglected but which constitute the demand of life as it is at present in Europe,—the aspects of labour and the native land. Catholicism being a non-regional religion has always tried to transcend national boundaries. According to the writer regional patriotism and respect for labour and physical work are the two limitations of Catholic education which must be removed in order to make education conform with the demands of life in the new industrial age. Such conformity to present day requirements, the writer holds, will make pupils more spiritual.

On the other hand, Kushensteiner, the organiser of public education at Munich, who has nothing to do with religion but like every German philosopher thinks in terms of the civic ideal and the state, holds that at the primary school age the dominant tendency in the child is physical activity Vocational education therefore must emphasise physical labour executed carefully honestly thoroughly and seriously Such manual work requires co-operation and organisation in some kind of community This naturally teaches the child ethical and civic principles. He further holds that the significance of labour school is that it demonstrates the fact that with a minimum of equipment the maximum of knowledge skill and joy may be derived from labour in the service of the civic ideal.

Writing purely as an educationist without advocating any ideology Lay in his Formation of the New Method, says about himself "The author came to the conclusion that receptivity mental process and outward action constitute a single whole nd both didactically and pedagogically should be so understood and treated that concrete receptivity and mental assimilation are but

instruments for representing the environment and the outer expression in its various forms, is but a reaction or adaptation to the conditions of the external world." Elsewhere the same writer says, "Here we have three principles, observation, mental activity and external action and all these in a fruitful education must be combined. Thus can education be dynamic and cast off the vice of classical educational passivity

In more recent times, the American Philosopher and writer on pedagogics, John Dewey has made a great contribution in the field of educational theory He is a Socialist. His contention is that the present organisation of the school does not correspond with the organisation of society and the needs of the time. He says, "Practically all the conceptions associated with culture and cultural education originated at a time when the immense superiority of a leisured class over all working classes was taken as a matter of course

Dewey sums up his idea of educational reform by enunciating the following three principles:

First, never before was it as important as it is now that each individual should be capable of self respecting, self-supporting, *intelligent* work—that each should make a living for himself and those dependent upon his efforts, and should make it with an intelligent recognition of what he is doing and an intelligent interest in doing his work well.

" Secondly never before did the work of one individual affect the welfare of others on such a wide scale as at present

" In the third place industrial methods and processes depend today upon knowledge of facts and laws

of natural and social science in a much greater degree than ever before. Our railways and steam boats, factories and farms, even our ordinary household appliances depend for their existence upon intricate mathematical physical, chemical and biological insight. They depend for their best ultimate use upon an understanding of the facts and relationships of social life. Unless the mass of workers are to be blind cogs and pinions in the apparatus they employ they must have some understanding of the physical and social facts behind and ahead of the material appliances with which they are dealing."

Again he says "We must use all work in wood and metal, of weaving, sewing and cooking as methods of living and learning not as distinct studies. We must conceive of them in their social significance as types of the process by which society keeps itself going, as agencies for bringing home to the child some of the primal necessities of community life and as ways in which these needs have been met by the growing insight and ingenuity of man in short his instrumentality through which the school itself shall be made a genuine form of active community life instead of a place set apart in which to learn lessons."

From the earliest time socialists of various types have recognised labour and activity as the basis of every good education.

Marx says, "Education means to us these things (1) intellectual development (2) physical development (3) polytechnical education, which will give knowledge relative to the general scientific principles of all production processes and will at the same time give children and youths a practice in the use of elementary tools of all branches of production. The reader will

mark here the kind of polytechnical education that is contemplated by Marx for the schools It is not work in a big mill or factory but the use of elementary tools What is to be learnt is not a particular industry but the "general scientific principles of production processes."

Again in the first volume of his Capital Marx writes, "Although the education clauses of the factory act go a very little way at least they embodied a proclamation that the giving of elementary instruction is to be a necessary accompaniment of child labour The success of the Act in this respect gave the first proof that it is possible to combine education and physical cultur with manual labour and on the other hand, to combine manul labour with education and physical culture. By questioning the school masters, the factory inspectors soon discovered that the factory children, although they receive only half as much instruction as the regular day scholars, learn quite as much and often more. This can be accounted for by the fact that with only being at school for one half of the day they are always fresh and nearly always ready and willing to receive instruction The system on which they work, half manual labour and half school, renders each employment a rest and a relief to the other Consequently both are far more congenial to the child than would be the case were he constantly kept at one."

Prince Kropatkin, the great revolutionary writer advocating a change in the contemporary methods of teaching, says, To the division of society into brain workers and manual workers we oppose the combination of both kinds of activities; and instead of technical education which means the maintenance of the present division between brain work and manual work we advocate the

education integrale or complete education which means the disappearance of that pernicious distinction. Plainly stated the aims of the school under this system ought to be the following, to give such an education that on leaving school at the age of 18 or 20 each boy and girl should be endowed with a thorough knowledge of science—such a knowledge as might enable them to give them a general knowledge of what constitutes the bases of technical training and such a skill in some special trade as would enable each of them to take his or her place in the grand world of the manual production of wealth.

SOVIET EXPERIMENT

In his volume entitled the Fundamental Question of Social Education, Shoolgin states the position of the Communist Party thus. "Labour to us is means of introducing children into the working world family in order that they may participate and understand the struggle of the masses, follow the history of human society acquire working, organising and collective habits and come into possession of the discipline of work.

Pinkwitch, the official chronicler of Soviet edu cation thus contrasts the old and new systems of edu cation and their respective ends. He writes " The need then was not for independent builders but for servants, clerks and slaves In the case of Soviet Republic on the contrary the question of enlisting widest mass of the people in the work of economic and cultural construction is a question of life and death. Consequently before

leaving school the child must receive a clear understanding in theory and practice of how to build a state for those who labour .. " "A unified school therefore places the labour of the people at the centre of their education. The basic theme penetrates the programme of the school in all its stages and the approach to labour is not from the point of view of a specialist but is from the point of view of a builder of new life, who regardless of his profession must have a clear comprehension of the relations and interdependance of various forms of labour Such a comprehension we call education. In its work, school must be connected most intimately with reality The prominent place must be given to productive labour" Further on he says, "The reader should be reminded at this point of the tremendous social and Political role of labour in the school. To us labour does not mean labour process nor self service nor school-work or shop but the central axis of the entire school."

As a matter of fact the Soviet System of education makes the nearest approach to Gandhiji's ideas. It may look strange, but it is a fact that in his practical reforms Gandhiji comes very near to what the socialists and communists aim at, though he does not believe in some of their methods and their ideology For instance, in his insistence on the payment of a minimum wage in industry not in theory and in the future, but in practice to-day by introducing it in all the productive activities he controls, Gandhiji is a practical socialist. Yet our socialist friends have some fault to find even with his idea of a minimum wage. If they cannot quarrel on the score of principle, they object to it on the ground of its meagreness. But if they were really scientific and objective they would find that the proportionate increase in the wages of

prepares children to be skilful and understanding workers of the community" What does Russia mean by a worker? He is a many-sided fully developed individual. He is to be as interested in matters intellectual and artistic as the old intelligentzia. In fact he is to be the new intelligentzia. This necessitates on the part of the worker much more than the possession of mere craft or skill. Clever hands in themselves are no longer sufficient There is to be understanding of the materials used and the significance of the product in the economic scheme of the country He must understand the relation between man and nature and their inter-action Theory and practice must be linked together so that the worker regards his work intelligently so that he knows its meaning and importance in the scheme of society *All this is meant by polytechnisation.*"

Addressing an educational conference, Lenin's companion Krupskaya said, The aim of polytechnisation was the all round education of a highly developed worker who could at the same time be worker and master of industry Hitherto the qualified worker was a man who through years of practice, became a skilled craftsman with very narrow limitations. Frequently he had no other knowledge besides that of his craft. He could not do the simplest sum. For example, take the old builder Often he cannot do be simplest calculation. He has not the most elementary knowledge of geometry so necessary to his work. We need a totally different training—one that can link up productive labour with scientific education " She warned her audience against the *serious* danger of mistaking narrow technical training for polytechnisation.

The warning is more necessary in India than in

Russia. In Russia, whether due to compulsion or due to the Russian character orders seem to be readily obeyed and instructions carried out. With us here it is otherwise. Gandhiji's ideas, even when they are formally accepted, are not worked in the spirit in which he would wish them worked. In the case of his educational scheme the writer knows that in several places mere technical education is being confused with Gandhiji's unified and integrated scheme. Such schemes of technical education are bound to fail. They will s. add to the cost of education and will yield such poor results that they will be abandoned in despair. Their initaitors will then triumphantly proclaim in their own failure the failure of Gandhiji's ideas. Sabotage is not the monopoly of political opponents. It may come from conformity without conviction, forced by political considerations and opportunism. In several places the scheme of Basic National Education is accepted because the committees appointed to suggest reform could not possibly bless the old system, universally condemned, and having no constructive ideas of their own, found Gadhiji's scheme ready at hand and therefore convenient for adoption. All the implications of the scheme are not fully grasped. Moreover the scheme is being worked by Government officials who often lack both faith and *initiative*.

How instructions are faithfully carried out in Russia is instanced by what happened in a village when the general order for polytechnising of education was issued. It was decreed "that every school must be attached to a productive unit of some sort—a factory or a state or collective farm. A certain village in Tadjhikistan had received the decree. Now there was neither factory

nor farm near enough to this village; yet the decree must be carried out. Some one on the Education Committee remembered that there was a barber's shop. The village school was attached to the barber's shop as the nearest productive unit."

If space did not prevent it would be interesting to quote more extensively from Russian books and authors. It would bring the knowledge of their own scriptures to our Indian Marxists. However if friendly advice is not out of place, I would suggest that the socialists in India may work Gandhiji's plans in the spirit in which he wants them to be worked and they will find that they have gained some practical knowledge of socialism at work, bereft of its slogans and generalisations formed in other lands and under other circumstances. This would be the true dialectical spirit of which there is so much theoretical talk these days. But will our friends accept any scheme of reform unless it looks modern and uses the fashionable language current in the West?

FAILURE OF PAST EXPERIMENTS

Why is it that in spite of so many reformers and thinkers in the field this necessary reform in pedagogics has not been accepted or carried out? Why again had the experimental institutions, started on the new lines a limited life? As a matter of fact this new and yet the oldest and the most natural method in education would have conqured Europe but for the Industrial Revolution. This revolution not only

destroyed village industry and handicrafts but shifted the centre of life and culture from the village and the town, with its economy of small industry and agriculture to the big industrial city The skilled artisan and work man was no more needed. All that the mills and the factories wanted was mechanical unskilled labour Such sweated factory labour could afford no possibilities for education. Also this labour in the beginning, was carried on under such harsh and heartless conditions that to think of weaving education around it would have been an insult and a mockery No such thing, therefore was attempted. In the days of handicrafts the child shared the labour of the family and derived much intellectual sustenance from it. The factory system and city life, more and more cut off men and women from the natural surroundings in which they lived and from which they derived a good part of their education and commonsense knowledge.

In the educational field therefore, the effect of the Industrial Revolution was retrograde. It increased vastly the artificial facilities for formal instruction of the rich city dwellers, while it greatly curtailed those of the rural population and of the army of unskilled labourers living in the city slums The result was that not only in wealth but in education, culture and sensibility a wide and unbridgeable gulf sprang up between the city dwelling upper and wealthy classes and the rest of the population, urban and rural. Before the Industrial Revolution the rich had no monopoly of education and culture rather the priestly and the middle classes constituted a kind of aristocracy of learning This aristocracy had its root firmly fixed in the soil and was in constant and close touch with the masses. It was thus,

that in ancient and medieval times education filtered down to the common people. The new education confined to the rich of the cities, snapped this bond between the classes and the masses. The poverty of the latter was now combined with ignorance and squalor moral and material. This in its turn produced the urban and the rural proletariat with its manifold problems, that threaten today the internal and international peace.

When skilled labour and handicrafts declined and their products had no economic value, their introduction in schools would have made education costly at a time when education was not the concern of the state Later on modern governments might have adopted the new scheme, but then it was not a question of an institution or two but of universal free education. Even then the states might have tried to bear the cost of such a fundamental nation-building activity but all the available funds were swallowed by the ever growing war machine, necessitated by their political economic and territorial rivalries. Apart from the question of cost which was a formidable one the introduction of a craft bereft of its economic value would have been an artificial and unnatural addition. The craft would neither have been taught nor learnt with any great interest or zeal The mechanical teaching of a valueless craft would not have made for correlated education. It would have failed to bring out the latent possibilities of the pupil. Therefore what the educational reformers advocated remained an unrealised possibility

This was of course the main reason why the reform in education could not be practically worked out. A subsidiary but a powerful reason was furnished by the position that the politicians came to occupy in the new

society With the advance of democracy politics no longer remained the preserve of the nobility The middle classes began progressively to assert themselves and take part in public life The new politicians derived their power not from birth or social status but from the electorate. To secure their position they had to nurse their constituencies. To do this successfully they needed training in the use and a skilful manipulation of words and phrases. The politician to succeed with the masses must often try to make the worse to appear the better reason and *vice versa*. He must appeal by means of mass psychology He must use catch-phrases and slogans. He must appear to redeem his election pledges. These cannot be fulfilled because they usually consist of abstract and general propositions partially related to facts and circumstances. But the politician must somehow make out a case for himself and his party He must show by means of words, phrases and propaganda that he has accomplished what he has never attempted. He must also appear to the masses as educated refined and learned in all conceivable branches of knowledge. This can be possible only if his education is of a formal and abstract character As in ancient Greece so in the modern democratic age a knowledge of dialectics in the Greek sense has come to occupy an artificially important position. In all public schools and universities there are debating societies, mock assemblies, and parliaments. Here the budding lawyer and the politician prepares for his future career Discussions in such societies are naturally altogether unreal and unconnected with facts. The pupil has not yet the necessary knowledge and experience for serious and effective thinking, but what he lacks, is made up by the use of formal logic and eloquent phrasing of language. Very frequently

therefore the prize boy in these schools and college debates, blossoms forth as the future politician under a democratic regime. This perhaps accounts for the dearth of real statesmen today It also explains the marked tendency of democracies to hypocrisy

The principle, however that education should have reference to reality and that theory and practice should be mutually combined and strengthened, was never altogether lost sight of It gained recognition in the science laboratory and the polytechnic In Europe and America, more so in the latter country some of the biggest and the most flourishing scientific and technical institutions are attached to big industry Even where science, engineering and technical institutions are not attached to factories and workshops, the students have periodically to go to the industrial establishments for their practical work and training In these fields the principle is recognized that practice and theory should go hand in hand. Only in Humanistic studies has this principle not received due recognition. This, as we have explained, was due to the peculiar economic and industrial conditions of modern civilization and democratic politics. Yet even here there has been no dearth of experimental schools which have yielded good results

However education by observation and work, though not carried out in practice, is a fully recognised principle in all modern pedagogics. For small children Kindergarten and Montessory systems are in vogue everywhere. Then there is the Dalton system of laboratory work and the Project method. Whatever these new systems may have accomplished in other countries, and they have not accomplished much, their introduction in India has made the financial burden of educating children prohibitive

except for the rich and upper middle classes. In some big centres like Bombay the tuition fee for a child ranges from Rs.8/ to Rs.15/ per month. To this must be added a few rupees for conveyance charges. This is the cost of the Kindergarten schools. The cost of the Project method would be prohibitive even for the rich. The principles underlying these systems are sound but the methods are too costly for a poor country like India. Apart from the prohibitive cost these systems cannot be fully utilized. The education the child gets in the first few years is followed by the orthodox system. Whatever little gain has accrued to him, is lost by years of uninteresting and uncreative intellectual work mechanically done in the classroom.

What Gandhiji proposes to accomplish by his scheme, is to make education, through remunerative and creative physical work under the existing Indian conditions possible and practical. He proposes, so to say to reform cheapen and extend the scope and the method underlying the modern system of education we have mentioned and square educational practice with approved theory. This cannot be done by merely providing children with toys and knick knacks, nor by work done in ignorance and indifference to its economic value, involving a large amount of waste of time, material and money but by providing a handicraft exactly and carefully learnt, whose efficiency and progress is constantly checked by the economic measure, and learnt, not only to provide a modest and honourable livelihood, but also as a useful and scientific method for purposes of general education. Work so carefully and meticulously done is scientific work. The possibilities, therefore, of Gandhiji's scheme in terms of real education, which means the growth of the

individual and the social advancement, cannot be exaggerated

PROBLEM STUDY

After all education is for life. It cannot therefore be cut off from life and its problems. Life is nowhere simple It is complex and presents complex problems. Actual difficulties and situations in life are never solved by reference to one specialised branch or field of knowledge. Rather each life problem enters into a number of subjects It needs for its solution the help of a group of subjects intimately related Take for instance agriculture. It must be studied not only in connection with biology physics and chemistry but with reference to economics and politics. In our schools and universities subjects dealing with physical sciences are usually cut off from economics and politics. A knowledge of the physical sciences may produce a good agriculturist but unless he is conversant with the market and the periodical fluctuations of prices, unless he knows some rudimentary economics and politics, he may find the bumper crop he has raised by his scientific knowledge remaining unsold in his granary What the present-day education however does, is to give the agriculturist a knowledge of the physical sciences and leave him to acquire the necessary economic and commercial knowledge, as best he may by blunder and trial and personal experience dearly bought.

The best method of education, the one that would be true to life, would therefore be to study groups of

subjects that are inter related, in connection with each other as they present themselves in concrete problems of life. At a later stage different subjects and fields of knowledge may if necessary be separated for further specialised study But this should be only for particularly gifted students and not for the ordinary Today subjects are not correlated among themselves. Such of them as have no possible connection in life are artificially combined in the curriculum. Educational work is never concretely integrated or co-ordinated. Our professors and teachers work in isolation and in complete ignorance of what their colleagues in the same institution or other institutions are doing. Thus the real complexity of life problems is artificially simplified, to the detriment of the pupil and the teacher Education is cut off from life and its concerns and becomes verbal, formal and artificial. Education that is woven round a craft avoids this artificial separation and isolation of subjects. The work of different teachers and of educational institutions becomes related, integrated and unified. The institution teachers and the taught become partners in one co-operative enterprise. This not only makes for the advancement of knowledge but yields concrete practical results in its process. Such education becomes a real preparation for lif and its problems.

TYRANNY OF WORDS

Education that is concrete and centres round a craft has yet another great advantage over verbal and theoretical knowledge. It saves the pupil from what may be called the tyranny of words Every word that the worker uses stands for something concrete and real It has its counter-part in the external world. Every word that lacks a particular and definite reference, the worker looks upon with legitimate suspicion He knows that words are mere symbols. They do not exist in their own right As long as they signify things, relations and processes they have meaning and value. When the things and relations that words represent do not exist in the external world or exist in an indefinite and ill-defined condition, he knows what value to attach to knowledge derived from the use and study of such words From his handling of real objects and knowing their relation he learns the origin of words and how they came to acquire meaning and what useful purpose they serve. He also knows their limitation

Misunderstanding about the symbolic character of words their misuse and mishandling have produced interminable squabbles and controversies in the world. Such controversies could easily be terminated by reference to facts. But theoretical and abstract knowledge has the tendency so to cloud the human mind that men and women are ever ready to fly at each other's throats in defence of mere words Nothing has produced more war and bloodshed than the loose and uncritical use of language, especially of general and abstract terms. Even scientists are not free from the entanglement created by

words. Very often the instrument of language that they use becomes their master Science should stand for carefully verified knowledge. But frequently generalisations that serve as hypothesis are taken as demonstrated facts and applied to every-day practical affairs of the world For instance, materialism is but a theory It is not a scientifically verified fact. It is only a hypothesis in science. One wonders if it ever can be verified as a scientific proposition on which honest and sane minds will agree. Yet many philosophers, economists and practical reformers and politicians would use this hypothesis as if it were a scientifically demonstrated fact and base upon it their practical programmes. A generation back it was mechanical materialism that was conclusive Today it is dialectical materialism. Both are unproved hypotheses for facilitating the work of the scientists, but they have been taken to be scientifically verified truths.

About this tyranny af words Pestalozzi says "When men rush into the labyrinth of words, formulas and opinions without having a progressive knowledge of the realities of life their minds must develop on this one basis of words and can have no other sense of strength In another place he says, "In Europe the culture of the people has become vain babbling as fatal to faith as to true knowledge: an instruction of mere words which contain a little dreaming and show which cannot give us the calm wisdom of faith and love but on the contrary lead to unbelief and superstition, to selfishness and hardness. It is indisputable that the mania for words and books which has absorbed everything in our popular instruction has been carried so far that we cannot possibly remain long as we are. Everything convinces

me that the only means of preserving us from remaining at a civil, moral, and religious dead level is to abandon the superficiality the piecemeal, and infatuation of our popular instruction and to recognise intuition as the true fountain of knowledge. Add to this the heaps of useless dull and uninteresting textbooks imposed upon the pupil, *not because of their intrinsic worth but because of their* economic value to the authors who are sought to be patronised, and you have a complete and faithful picture of educational conditions in India today

General and abstract terms have no fixed or definite connotation. They do not specify anything that is particular and tangible in the world of reality Physical sciences deal with facts about which there can be little disagreement between intellectually honest and sane people. Social sciences, like economics and politics, dealing with general and abstract terms whose connotation is at least vague, produce a body of knowledge about which the most intellectually honest and sane people can and very often do disagree. There must therefore be some difference between scientific terms that have a definite, fixed and not easily changeable content, and such general and abstract terms as have no such content or at best a doubtful one. To call the two kinds of knowledge, one derived from physical facts and the other from abstractions, as scientific knowledge is to fall into the logical fallacy of four terms.

Again general terms are formed by abstracting from facts and reality some of their significant characteristics. *Yet after this abstraction they are freely* used to prove real and momentous propositions in life. Few understand that terms like capitalism, fascism, communism, Gandhiism or any ism are high abstractions. The meaning

given to them will accord with no fixed and definite reality corresponding to these terms but will accord with one's predilections and passions with one's political, social and economic label How many in the world today would manage to remain cool at the mention of such words? The same word will excite contrary passions in different minds. To a fascist, communism is all that is diabolical, dark and evil in this world. It personifies the Fallen Angel. To the Marxist, however it represents all that is good and beautiful, all that is worth living and dying for- nay all for which it is worth murdering fellow human beings and even old friends and comrades!

Take another instance The word Gandhism will raise before some, concrete images of reaction, exploitation mysticism, superstition and all that is retrograde in the India of today To others it will bring the vision of Ram Rajya, whatever that may be At a meeting in Patna for the organisation of earthquake relief Gandhiji offered to the Government respectful coopera tion Straightway in some scientific and ultra critical minds the phrase used raised images of cringing flattery support to foreign exploitation and imperialistic prestige It did not matter that the person using the words was a determined opponent of the Government and used them not out of his weakness but out of his conscious strength It was well known that if the Government refused co-operation, he would go his way The critics made no allowance for this or for the occasion on which the words were used, it was one in which millions of people, rich and poor high and low were involved in a heart-rending tragedy such, that it obliterated all differences for the the time being. No allowance was made even for

movements, there was an advance in the study of natural sciences. The emphasis of natural science is on the individual. Social sciences, like economics and politics stress the welfare of society Both value education from the practical and utilitarian point of view The spread of scientific, technical and commercial institutions is directly the result of the modern scientific and sociological spirit. It has come to be progressively recognised that the purpose of education is to fit the individual to take his rightful place in the economic, social and political life of the community It is no more a preparation for the spiritual life, for the life hereafter It is rather that the individual be trained to become an enlightened and useful citizen.

This tendency in education was further emphasised by the rise of modern democracies. A popular government must educate its masters The idea originated in England. In America, Jefferson enunciated it when he wrote, It is an axiom in my mind that our liberty can never be safe but in the hands of the people themselves, and that too of the people with a certain degree of instruction. This is the business of the State to effect and on a general plan." Democracy needs for its smooth working a minimum of general universal education. On the other hand, progressive industrialisation and mechanisation need intelligent workers and labourers. Therefore for its own needs and for public requirements the State must educate its citizens.

Education from the earliest times has been conceived of in terms of character Modern times lay greater emphasis upon the civic rather than the religious character This has changed the complexion and colour of citizen morality From being based upon religion,

revealed or natural, it has come to be based upon scientific and sociological ideas of co-operation and mutual aid for a common purpose. Education, therefore, in modern times is conceived of in terms of citizenship It equips the individual for the service of society in which he too is included. From this has developed also the idea of the education of the defective and the criminal. Without proper education the former is likely to be a burden on society the latter if not reclaimed, would be a danger to society

There is yet another idea in modern sociology which education must fulfil The individual is the epitome of the face. The culture and advance of the race find their highest expression in him. He reflects in himself, the social mind He is the inheritor of the past. He has to leave this inheritance not only intact, but also increased and enhanced by his own individual contribution for those who follow him.

All these different trends in the scientific, social, economic, political and cultural fields, have their influence on modern educational thought. If education is to fulfil these new aspirations and demands an appropriate method must be found for it. This method is to be psychological, scientific and practical. It must concern itself not only with theoretical knowledge and instruction but with work, activity and experiment. The earlier theoreticians and reformers such as Rousseau Pestalozzi, Herbert, and Froebel as we have seen, approached the question of method from the practical sociological viewpoint. More than educationists they were reformers and philanthropists. They therefore tried to solve the question of methodology as practical social reformers. Others following them have done likewise.

If education then is to fit the future citizen to fill his role in society he must cultivate in school the character appropriate to a social being. He must be trained for his future life. He must not only learn political and civic virtues theoretically but he must practise them, even while he is at school If he is to be a member of a democratic state he must learn, in however small a degree, th art of self-discipline and self government. He must be brought up in habits of co-operation, obedience to self imposed laws and discipline appropriate to a free citizen who in himself is both the ruler and the subject He must cultivate breadth of vision, toleration and good neighbourliness. While asserting his own legitimate rights he must be prepared to discharge faithfully the obliga tions imposed on him by the fact of his enjoying the blessings of a progressive and civilised society

In all Western countries effort is made to develop this side of the pupil s character In the school there is some kind of community life and a measure of self government. In America this idea is carried further than in Europe. Forster in his work Political Ethics and Political Pedagogy gives his view on self govern ment thus nothing arouses youths to political consciousness and political collaboration in a constitutional state more than the early formation of the habits of learning responsibilities which call for trust, implicit obedience to representatives whom they have elected in independent effort at introducing into life conditions which they themselves have established."

If self-discipline and self government in educational institutions are not to degenerate into mere forms and if we are to be saved from witnessing the farce of legisla tive assemblies and parliaments, caricatured in schools

and colleges, there must be some real problems which the pupils have to solve. There must be some kind of genuine organised society in the school itself. If mutual help and co-operation are not to be emptied of all their content, the society in school must be engaged in some fruitful creative activity. This is best supplied by the organisation of an art or a craft in the school. The value of creative labour as a principle of self government can scarcely be exaggerated. Here self-government is neither imposed upon the pupils from above nor mimicked by them but grows out of their daily needs and requirements. No art or craft can be successfully practised without a previously settled plan and purpose for which the members of the school have to organise and discipline themselves. The teachers and the pupils have to co-operate in order to bring about the desired results. The labour and the craft principle therefore supplies the greatest impetus to democratic self government in schools. It also provides opportunities for the cultivation of political and civic virtues under the expert leadership of the teacher.

Apart from purely political and civic virtues the labour school encourages the cultivation of moral virtues. The morality of to-day may not be based on religious dogmas, specially those of a revealed religion. It should be based on the enlightened experience of the race in many fields of activity. When such a morality is given an external form and is institutionalised, the institutions created should be in accord with the results of science and the economic, social and political ideas and ideals prevalent in modern times. Current morality cannot be cut off from the sum total of life as it is lived in the complex world of to-day. It must also periodically change

with the advance of knowledge. The basic principles, for instance, of truth, justice and non-violence must remain the same for they are at the root of the social order Without them no organised life is possible. But these principles have ever to be introduced in changing forms and institutions. To-day we may not mould our morals and embody them in institutions of a bygone age, historic and prehistoric. We may also not buttress this kind of morality by the idea of the fatherhood of God and his real or supposed commandments. We can only build morality on the actual fact of the brotherhood of man and his consequent equality and liberty The general rule for average man and woman today will not be the will of my father in Heaven but the golden rule of do unto others as you would be done by

This new morality cannot be built on the basis of the hierarchy of classes or castes. It cannot be built on the supposition of a leisured and cultured class apart from the toiling millions. It must be based upon co-operative human labour This must exclude the hankering after special privileges acquired as a result of birth or even of religious sanctity We have already mentioned that the principle of co-operative labour cannot fail to evolve ideas of truth, love, justice, peace and discipline No co-operative enterprise can work without these virtues among the co-operating units. Without love and non-violence the enterprise will lack cohesive organisation proper and purposeful co-operation. Many other practical individual virtues must result from work carried out with a purpose and that of public corporate good. The resultant group cohesion and patriotism will not be based upon exploitation and earth hunger They will take the form of the solidarity of workers in all the various fields of

activity of a complex society A society of workers will not be interested in the exploitation of each other All this will lead to an enlightened rational morality free from the superstition of rigid custom and religious dogma

It is therefore in the fitness of things that while emphasising moral training which should be imparted through work and the personal life of the teacher Gandhiji's scheme makes no provision for the teaching of particular religions. It is not anti religious or Godless as in Russia, but it allows the utmost freedom to the pupils and their guardians in matters religious. The parents are free to provide any denominational education they choose for their wards. The state which belongs to no particular denomination but to all, very wisely leaves this delicate and highly complex and pre-eminently subjective activity to the free choice of the individual The result of this will be the spiritual emancipation of the individual. It will give an immediate accession of strength to ideas of mutual good-will and toleration. Fanaticism will be at a discount Religion will be the private concern of the individual. He will be free to decide his relation with his Maker if he believes in one, or between him and his inner deeper and profounder instincts.

THE PRINCIPLE OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

We have in a previous section mentioned the two underlying principles of Gandhiji's new scheme of education. We have so far been discussing the one, that Basic Education should centre round a craft. We shall now discuss the second basic principle of the system, namely that the craft chosen should be so learnt that its produce may have economic value sufficient to defray the tuition expense of the pupil.

Both these principles were opposed in the beginning by the learned. They were on the one hand convinced that it was impossible to weave all literary and abstract knowledge imparted in schools, round a handicraft and on the other hand, they thought it was not possible for a handicraft to be sufficiently remunerative to provide for the recurring cost of tuition. If somehow the latter was made possible, it would result in the neglect of intellectual work and in the sweating of child labour. As time went on, however it dawned upon the educationists that the first was a well recognised principle of education and it was in consonance with the most modern principles of educational psychology and science. But the second, the principle of economic self-sufficiency they thought and think as unpractical, nay harmful. A great deal of doubt about self sufficiency was raised by Shri Narendra Dev the mover of the resolution on Basic Education, both in the Subjects Committee of the Congress and in the Open Session at Haripura. He spoke unreservedly in favour of the first principle and was cautious and even sceptic about the second. The advocates of Gandhiji's schemes also seem to have been

rather apologetic, in deference to the criticism offered They have modified their statement and declared that the craft must not necessarily pay the entire tuition expenses but efforts must be made to see that the work done has some economic value. This, of course, is necessary if the work is to be carefully and scientifically done. It will ensure the efficiency of the pupil and the teacher Gandhiji also seems to have no objection to the modification of the principle of economic value of the work turned out He thinks that if the principle of making work done in the class economically paying is recognised, the rest would depend upon the teacher and the management.

This is good so far as it goes. But there are likely dangers in the position, which if not guarded against, will make Gandhiji's scheme as unworkable as similarly conceived schemes in the past. The danger of this in India is real Recently every educational conference central or provincial, has recognised and recommended the principle of imparting education through craft work. But if there is any divorce between this and the principle of economic self-sufficiency the scheme is bound to fail If proper attention is not paid to the economic value of the goods produced by the children, in course of time the value question will altogether disappear With its disappearance it will be an easy step to have unremunerative craft work performed indifferently The work will be done without the necessary scientific and meticulous care. This will not only affect the quality of the work but also the quality of the education based upon it. Moreover as we have already said, it will add very greatly to the cost of education. Ultimately the nation will not be prepared to bear this huge cost

Slowly the handicraft will be abandoned even as it has been in many experimental institutions in Europe and America The principle has been recognised but its cost has been prohibitive. Therefore it is considered unpractical.

Also if the work done has no economic value it is cut off from reality and the facts of life Work done becomes only a means and as means it is likely to fail. Gandhiji's scheme is one whole. If one part is emphasised to the neglect of the other the whole scheme which is an organic one, will sooner or later collapse. For Gandhiji, craft work is not merely a means of literary education; it is also an end in itself. Unless craft work is treated as an end in itself, it will lose progressively its economic value, efficiency and significance.

Literary education is also not merely an end in itself. It is a means for the proper performance of the craft work. Without it craft work will become mechanical It will be performed in the traditional way that is, loosely and unscientifically Loose and unscientific craft work as an educational method has little value. On the other hand, intellectual education that centres upon a craft enhances the value and efficiency of the craft Both act and react on one another Both are alternatively means and ends. They mutually sustain and strengthen each other Any over-emphasis of one to the neglect of the other will adversely affect both.

It was reported sometime back that a high educational authority while performing the opening ceremony of a Teachers Training Schools for Basic Education, said that he was not much concerned if the work done had no economic value. But perhaps he was not thinking of

Gandhiji's scheme of Basic Education. He had some scheme of his own in which Gandhiji's main principles were loosely accepted. Any way those who are indifferent to the economic value of work turned out will soon find that such craft work as a method of education becomes unpractical. Situated as we are, and considering our political and financial handicaps and the necessity of universal education, Gandhiji's scheme worked in his spirit and not merely in form, is the only one which has any chance of accomplishing the end in view namely universal education. There is no other practical way before the nation to-day

But we are asked by our socialist friends if this will not lead to the exploitation of child labour This objection we must repeat, is a concrete example of the tyranny of words. Child labour is condemned straightway without going into any further details about it It will not be out of place therefore to quote the communist prophet and the communist scripture on the point These cannot fail to carry conviction and decide the issue Here is what Marx says:

> "It is necessary to indicate the age below which children should not be permitted to labour A general prohibition of child labour is inconsistent with the existence of large industry and therefore can be nothing more than a good intention. And even if the introduction of such a prohibition were possible it would be a reactionary measure. By strictly regulating the worker's time in accordance with his age and taking other precautionary measures for the purpose of protecting children, the early union of productive work with teaching is a mighty instrument for the transformation of the present society

The question however is raised if the work turned out by the boys will really pay as much as it is expected to pay that is, the allowance of the teacher In this we can only rely upon the experience of those who have worked in the field of some handicraft and carefully calculated the earnings of children between the ages of 7 and 14. At Wardha experiments have been carried out by Shri Vinoba Bhave at the Nalwadi Ashram. They go to prove that two hours daily work at the Charkha will give an average pupil an income between Re. 1/ to Rs. 1/8/ per month. The calculation has been made on the basis of a minimum wage of annas 3 for an eight hour working day Three annas per day is the minium wage paid by the spinners association these days.

The figures worked out for the last few months at the Basic School attached to the C P Teachers Training College at Wardha, indicate that the above is a fair estimate. After 3 months practice at the takli or rather in the first three months of the experiment pupils turned out work of the value of about annas ten per month each. This was after making due allowance for wastage. If three months practice at takli gave this result, it is not extravagent to expect, after better practice, a wage ranging between a rupee and a rupee and a half per month per pupil, specially if the takli is replaced by the charkha. Card-board work yields higher figures. The students at Wardha could earn by it even in the first three months or so Re. 1/ to Rs. 1/4/

Now the average pay of a village teacher in India is not more than Rs 10 to 12 per month. This in all conscience is very meagre for those who are educating the nation s children A better pay will have to be

given. Immediate increase in the village teachers emoluments should raise his monthly allowance to Rs. 20/- at least. A class of 20 to 25 boys working at the charkha for not more than a couple of hours per day can easily earn this amount, during the month In other handicrafts, such as card-board and carpentry more than this can be earned without difficulty These ar the economics of the scheme. But after all the economic question is one of the facts, not of theory The results can be observed by anybody interested in factual calcula tions at Wardha. The teachers there keep a very strict and accurate diary of each pupil s work.

But we are told the nation may not want to stick to village industry and might want to industrialise. What then! Supposing the nation abandons village industry in favour of centralised industry yet the latter cannot be introduced in schools for purposes of education. In Russia pupils below 18 are not sent to big factories Polytechnisation in education is carried on by means of handicra ts and decentralised school workshops The factory supplies the school with material scrap or other and tools for the workshop Usually it equips the workshop and sometimes provides the instructor In Kharkov the factory to which it (the school) was attached had d-tailed a highly qualified engineer who was a teacher to supervise the polytechnical work to see that it was carri-d on as education and not as training for a trade. He spends several hours daily at the school The workshops in this school were extraordinarily well equipped." This is what is happening in the workman s heaven where the nation stands for big c-ntralised industry

In India a fortunat or unfortunate combination

unique and special circumstances has not presented us with a clean slate on which to write any characters we choose. We have to follow the course of historical progress in our land. We cannot at our will and command create over night a new order of society. Even if the nation decides to industrialise and mechanise, it will find that this requires several decades. In the meantime it will be immensely advantageous to arrest the decay of existing handicrafts and if possible to add to them. Even in industrialised countries like Japan there is plenty of scope for handicrafts and village industry. With the advent of electricity some of the highly centralised industries can be decentralised. Ultimately if the nation ever decides to centralise industry completely it will find that it has more skilled and efficient labour than it would have if there were no handicrafts. A craftsman is always a better mechanic than a mere unskilled labourer. But as we have already pointed out, even when the nation has completely industrialised itself, for educational purposes it will have to establish school workshops where handicrafts are carefully learnt for the sake of general education. So whatever view we take, Gandhiji's scheme will be useful to the nation.

But what will happen to this huge production turned out from thousands of schools? The very persons who raise this question also tell us that the economic condition of this country can never improve unless production of all sorts is greatly increased. India is suffering from under production, in both agriculture and industry. It is not able to produce goods to satisfy the present effective demand of the nation when it is half-starved, half-clothed, and defectively supplied with

material goods. Why then should the critics be afraid of this new source of production? All ways and means towards the desired aim of increased production should be welcomed, as long as there is no glut and overproduction Our opponents cannot have it both ways. They cannot complain of under-production and yet decry a scheme of increased production simply because the machine that produces goods is the highly complex human machine or the primitive one that can be worked with the hand and not one imported from abroad. After all what is of the essence is increased production and not the sort of machine used.

But still we are reminded of the dislocation that will result from this new production being thrown on the market Will *it not* disturb industry? Will *it not* compete with private enterprise? Let us see if this need necessarily happen. India needs increased production If this has any meaning, it only means that India is today purchasing huge quantites of food and other raw and manufactured articles from abroad. If it is so all increased production within our borders should go to replace foreign imported goods. There need not be for a long time to come, any competition with indigenous enterprise and industry Whatever plan the nation adopts for increasing production, some sort of economic planning will be necessary so that the new production may not lie on the nation's hands. Whatever the means employed, we shall have to adopt suitable measures to see that the new production does not conflict with the other native production but drives away from our market foreign goods Therefore Gandhiji insists that the produce of the schools must be the charge of the government. The government will have to

wealth produced for its various and varied requirements. Marketing facilities will have to be provided for whatever remains unused. No wise government will provid these facilities, at the expense of the already existing indigenous enterprise. It will first tackle foreign imports If a government is not very foolish, this little planning should immediately suggest itself I believe, in order to finance their plan of universal education, the provincial governments combined even the Congress governments alone, can bring sufficient pressure today on the central government to ensure proper safeguards against the importation of unwanted articles. If need be to support such schemes of national good, constitutional deadlocks can be created. These will have the support of the people and in the end the central government will have no choice but to yield.

Gandhiji has declared that if complete prohibition results in loss of revenue to such an extent that provincial governments are unable to balance their budgets, a united demand must be made on the central government and if this demand is not accepted, deadlocks may justifiably be created for such a noble cause. If such a pressure can be put in the matter of prohibition, it can also be put in the interest of a scheme of universal education, which is as important as prohibition. Anyway if Gandhiji's scheme is theoretically sound, it is upto the provincial governments to put forth fforts to make it practically workable Of course, there will always be some gap between what is theoretically and practically possible But this cannot be helped in this imperfect world. The scheme is after all worth trying Nations and individuals can learn only by trial and if it must be, by failure. How many schemes has not

Bolshevik Russia tried and accepted or rejected in th *last two decades? Why should we not try a scheme* that opens out such bright possibilities industrial economic and educational?

MAIN PRINCIPLES OF BASIC EDUCATION

In an earlier section we have given briefly th opinions of some of the philosophers and reformers in education since Rousseau, who have advocated activity and craft work as a necessary part of education. They have advocated these principles mainly from the sociological and pedagogical viewpoints. Very few of them have as clearly perceived the potentialities of craft work in the way in which Gandhiji has envisaged them The latter's enunciation of the craft principle is bold and clear and goes further than what was contemplated by those who preceded him. It is therefore necessary at this stage to understand the full implications of his new scheme A brief statement of the steps he proposes will help to clarify the position and bring it out in relief against what others have advocated and attempted That Gandhiji has not been influenced by any of the reformers or movements in education in Europe and America in modern times need not be stressed here. He has initiated reforms in so many directions and has advocated such novel and revolutionary methods for his reforms that it will not take away from his greatnes and genius if we do not insist upon his originality in this particular field Briefly stated then, the various points of his educational reform are —

1. Education up to a particular minimum standard should be universal for all citizens, male and female. It may not be compulsory to begin with but as facilities are available it is to be compulsory. This universal minimum education he calls Basic Education. As the present system is of foreign importation and anti-national, his is national. Therefore it is called Basic National Education.

2. The course of this education is to run for seven years, beginning from the age of seven.

3. Basic National Education does not concern itself, for the present, with the pre-school stage or the post-basic stage.

4. Basic National Education must be imparted through the mother-tongue.

5. In its method it must be woven round some art or handicraft. All intellectual instruction must be imparted through the instrumentality of the craft chosen.

6. The craft chosen must be learnt systematically and scientifically with a view to efficiency and practical results. It must not be learnt merely as a means either for intellectual work or for economic self-sufficiency. It must be both a means and an end.

7. The product of the craft must be economically paying.

8. Efforts should be made to see that the money value of the work done covers the pay of the teacher.

9. The state should provide the rest of the expenses, of school buildings, furniture, books, maps and the whole of the apparatus including tools, etc. for the craft taught

10. The State should undertake to utilise the produce of the craft by which it may meet its own requirements or those of thelocal bodies where the school is establi shed. For any excess of goods produced, the State should provide marketing facilities.

These are in brief the main principles of the new scheme. Many opponents of the scheme have taken these points separately and criticised them, without trying to understand the full implications of the whol of the reform.

THE DIFFICULTIES IN THE WAY

We have said and hope we have proved that the new method of Gandhiji is simple, natural, scientific and psychological But none the less there are great difficulties in its introduction, which, if not surmounted are sur to bring about the failure of the experiment. The greatest difficulty is to find and train the necessary teachers for the scheme. Most of those who are already in the profession are incapable of initiating and working out new ideas. Gandhiji's method however requires careful and constant attention, vigilance and missionary zeal. The teacher has to labour here more than the pupils. He has to be not only careful but active and alert He has to be particular about every detail. He must keep a strict diary of whatever is done in the class room. H has to keep a careful record of work turned out by each pupil every day

Even then what a clever teacher does, may come to

be the norm. It may be systematised and recorded not for the stimulation of thought and invention but as a pattern to be carefully copied. As a matter of fact all learning and teaching in the past became formal, rigid and confined to words, because teachers failed to be careful and vigilant They followed what was chalked out for them by the gifted among their ranks. They failed to use their initiative Thus they brought about the degeneration of knowledge into scholasticism. If Gandhiji's scheme is to succeed, each teacher and each class will have to find out, after a careful and patient study of all attendant circumstances, the way that will be most appropriate for them. In the past, even in pioneer schools which broke new ground and opened up fresh fields, in course of time work became stereotyped and consequently lost its freshness, vigour and dynamism. The teacher therefore has always to be on his guard and see that even where he creates forms and systems, these give only guidance and direction without destroying originality We are living not in static but in dynamic times Everything is in a flux today more than ever before. The teacher has therefore to be progressive and moving. He may not rest on his oars. Every teacher has got to be an inventor and initiator If one process brings static conditions, he has to vary the process He has to find out for himself a new way of approach. No particular approach can be best for all times and under all circumstances. Books for the teacher as well as for the pupil can be but stimulants. They must never impose their rigid authority on the teacher or the taught.

Thus will knowledge remain fresh and be stimulated by the employment of ever new forms and methods. Thus will it get free from the entanglement of mere

words. If the above difficulties are successfully guarded against, both teaching and learning will be joyous, easy and fruitful.

BASIC EDUCATION–ITS PLACE IN GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY

(i) SCHOOL, INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Education concerns itself with the training and development of the individual. But the human individual attains his individuality only in a group, in some sort of society. He does not develop in a vacuum. There can be no human growth without the social background. If an individual renounces the world and becomes a recluse or an anchorite, this too is against the background of some kind of social order. His very retirement, if it is of any high order, is for a social purpose. Mere renunciation and retirement, devoid of any ulterior social purpose, unless it is temporary and for training, is an act of egoistic selfishness, however sanctified by religion. It is a mild kind of exploitation of society. Society makes even the anchorite's life in the jungle possible. Without it he will not have the necessary physical, mental and moral sustenance. Every genuine renunciation, therefore, in addition to the aim of perfection and self realisation, keeps before itself the ideal of social service by example and precept. It is both for the individual and for society. Such was the renunciation of the great teachers like Budha, Christ and "

Krishna. It was a kind of discipline for perfecting themselves, so that they might mould society the more effectively

The fact is that society and the individual can be separated only in theory In actual life both go together and are inter related. This inter relation can only be ignored at the peril of the individual and the society Any over-emphasis of the one will be at the expense of the other Such over-emphasis destroys the balance which a true and lasting civilisation needs Most of the trouble of the world has been due to the loss of this balance. Sometimes the individual with his anarchic tendencies produces confusion in society At other times society so crushes the individual that his initiative and personality are lost and he becomes a mere automaton. Humanity has been oscillating between the thesis of the individual and the anti-thesis of society The proper synthesis, if it has ever been achieved, has been short lived

Education to be effective and fruitful must therefore, without neglecting the individual and his needs and requirements, have a social setting and a social aim The ancient Chinese sage and philosopher Confucious, brings out the connection between education and the life of the community and the individual thus "What heaven has conferred is nature; an accordance with nature is called the path of duty Regulation of this path is called instruction." Now duty has both an individual and social content. Coming to more modern times, Professor John Dewey defines education "as the process of remaking experience, giving it a more socialist value through increased individual experience by giving the individual better control of his powers.

Again, Professor James defines education as "the organisation of acquired habits of action which would well fit the individual to his physical and social environments.

The present system of education in India has, as is well known, very little social purpose Its main aim is that of solving the individual's bread problem It is no wonder therefore, that even this remains unsolved.

Then education is for life Life implies some sort of social organisation Each social order has, therefore, devised appropriate education for its needs and ends. Again education is never merely for the acquisition of information and knowledge however useful, but for developing character This character the individual cannot develop in isolation It implies a social atmosphere. Society gives character whatever meaning it has. History gives us examples of societies with various aims and purposes Each requires in its citizens appropriate character There have been societies organised predominantly for military purposes. Others had spiritual aims. Then there have been commercial and industrial societies. Each society devises education appropriate to its dominant purpose.

The earliest civilised people who are known to have developed a complex system of education were the Chinese. Education in China bears the closest relation with life and the social structure. Nowhere has education been more successful in producing a distinct type of highly cultured individual who has more or less remained the same through the centuries. The ancient Hindus had their own correlated system though principally for the higher castes. The four great objects in life, four duties namely Arth, Kama, Dharma and Moksha"

had to be performed through four Varnas and Ashrams. Fulfilment of these has reference both to the individual and to society. The ancient Spartans devised education appropriate to the polity and aims of their state. Their education was predominantly military. Athens had its own system. The mediaeval social order had its own particular system. Europe in modern times has devised some sort of system for its dominant purpose. The newly formed Communist State of Russia has its own system of education devised for the ends that the state keeps before itself.

Without going into the question whether an individual or a society can be thoroughly and entirely changed and moulded by a particular system of education, or there are certain instincts and tendencies, which no education can entirely change or eradicate, we may take up the middle commonsense view that education is one of the major factors in the moulding of the individual and for giving direction to a society. Each social unit has some kind of conscious or unconscious purpose. Its education too gets moulded after this purpose. In forming the character of his pupils, the teacher has consciously to keep before himself the progress and fulfilment of this purpose. The aim in view may however be achieved by a number of educational methods, though there is some necessary connection between the aim and the method. But whatever be the aim the method has to be scientific, psychological and efficient. It must be easy and natural. However certain methods an education are more appropriate to certain social ends than others. It will not, therefore, be out of place here to examine the new method of Gandhiji in the light of the social aim he has in view for his nation.

(ii) GANDHIJI'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The aim that a particular society keeps before itself necessarily follows closely the ideal that its representative members keep before themselves for individual growth and fulfilment. This individual ideal is powerfully affected by what it believed to be the origin and the destiny of the individual. For Gandhiji the individual has a divine origin. He has also a divine destiny. His aim therefore must necessarily be spiritual and not material. *If he is to achieve this aim he must be an* end unto himself. He must not be used as a means. He must not allow himself to be so used either by other individuals or by society. Surely he has to work out his divine destiny in society, but if his highest good cannot be achieved through a particular social order he has the right, nay the duty, to revolt and cut out a new path for himself. But this revolt must not be merely for individual but also for social ends.

For the materialist, individual as such is no end in himself. He has in fact no existence beyond the temporary one in which he happens to find himself today. He dissolves and disappears with the dissolution of the body. There is no continuity of life for him. There is no personal immortality. Society is continuous and it has a sort of immortality. This immortality consists in unending eternal progress. This progress is the ever increasing mastery over nature and the resultant refinement of culture and civilisation, though this is not quite so apparent in modern society. The individual disappears and dies. Society lives on, progresses and works out ever higher forms. There is and can be no end to its progress. Individuals must therefore necessarily be means to its ends. They cannot claim an independent

existence. True, as society advances individuals of the future will live richer fuller and nobler lives But there is no such thing as perfection for the individual here and now or immortality hereafter His work is done when he has helped to push society forward. There can be of course no perfection even for society The goal is ever shifting forward. Whether the individual, with all his hopes and fears, his trials and tribulations, his joys and sorrows, will ever be satisfied with an aim which lies outside of himself for which he has to work and suffer whose triumphs he as an individual will never witness or enjoy is a question beyond the scope of our present study

For Gandhiji the individual must work out his per fection in a spiritual society Such a society must be based on principles that will lead the individual on to his divine destiny Briefly stated these principles are those of love, non violence, truth and justice A social order based upon these, excludes all exploitation, economic, social, political or even religious. The economic field is not the only field for exploitation. Power may be derived from a variety of sources and it may lead to the exploitation of the unfortunate and the weak in a variety of ways The greatest scourges of history the tyrants and the dictators, those who have used vast numbers of men and women as means to their individual ends of aggrandisement, glory and success, have not been necessarily those who were in possession of or cared for economic pre-eminence. Most of them were indifferent to the acquisition of great fortunes either for themselves or for their descendants. Some of them have even been ascetics in their personal lives, but they had an mordinate and overpowering lust for power The dicta

tors of today do not exploit their fellow-citizens by means of, or for the purpose of wealth, as the capitalists do. They are known to be simple and even austere in their personal lives and tastes. They have got their present position not by the manipulation of economic forces but by using power politics and subtle and psychological methods of appealing to common human passions and by mass propaganda.

The social order that Gandhiji contemplates must therefore be free from economic power or any other exploitation. If this is to be accomplished, society's politics, its economic and social life must be built on non violence truth and justice. If any of these principles are absent, and to the extent to which they are absent, there is bound to be exploitation. Whenever there is exploitation, man's divine dignity is offended and he becomes a mere means and not an end in himself. Gandhiji therefore is against all concentration of power social position, or worldly goods in the hands of the few What he contemplates is a classless society of workers. His utterances on this point have often been misunderstood and have produced confusion. He has on several occasions said that he believes in the caste system. He is in the habit of using old words with a new connotation, which can be gathered not from a particular statement taken in isolation but as one intimately connected with his thought and philosophy So interpreted it would appear that what he means by caste system is not what is current in the present day Hindu society and what the orthodox Hindu understands by it, but something quite different. What he means is division of labour and specialisation of functions according to an individual's nature (Swabhava) according to his natural (hereditary) and acquired ab-

He contemplates no separate castes or classes hierarchically arranged He does not however believe that this classless worker's society must necessarily be built round centralised big industry That individually controlled centralised big industry leads to exploitation needs no proof. It is there and goes by the name of capitalism and has produced most of the international and inter-class jealousy and hatred, leading to civil and external strife, that is witnessed today the world over It is however supposed that socialised and publicly owned and controlled centralised big industry and business will not lead to exploitation. But whatever experience we have in this direction, and it is *confined to one country only* Russia, where the experiment is being tried, goes to prove that it has led to dictatorship and bureaucratic rule, where every activity of the citizen is strictly regulated and controlled. Such a society must of necessity rigorously exclude all deviation in thought and action from the prescribed forms and standards. It must regulate the entire life of the individual. As an antithesis to unregulated individualism working for private and anarchic ends it may succeed for a time, but in the end it is bound to cripple the individual by taking away his initiative and freedom of action. Its revolutionary zeal of today can be no indication of its very great limitations and the germs of decay that lie concealed within it. In order to save itself it is already making dangerous concessions that do not altogether square with its equilitarian philosophy More over its authority is based not on moral but on physical force. Physical force and violence are not only undemocratic but they are bound to lead to exploitation of some sort or the other The non-exploiting society Gandhiji contemplates must progressively rely upon moral force and moral sanctions.

To avoid therefore unregulated and anarchic individualism of the capitalist system as also the crushing concentration of power of the communists, Gandhiji proposes to build the economic and social structure on decentralised agriculture and industry. In pursuance of this aim he advocates cottage and village industries on the basis of limited private property. In this he works more in accord with human history and psychology than the Russian reformers. But in order that private property may yield the best material and moral results, it must not be allowed to degenerate into private big fortunes, descending undivided from father to son by laws of inheritance. Decentralised village and cottage industries check the accumulation of big fortunes at their very source. If this original handicap is not enough Gandhiji will not hesitate to put legal disabilities such as inheritance and death duties and such like taxes against the accumulation of big private fortunes.

We are however asked what about such industries as are incapable of decentralisation and are yet necessary for the present civilisation. Gandhiji's idea is that such industries must be publicly owned and publicly controlled. For the rest agriculture and industry must complement and supplement each other. As in industry Gandhiji is against big privately-owned business, so he is against big zamindaris. That at present he does not appear to work against big business and big zamindars is due to practical considerations and to the method of his struggle and reform. He does not want to introduce any elements of bitterness, coercion or violence. He works by methods of satyagraha by civil disobedience. If at this stage he does not advise civil disobedience against big business and big zamindaris, it is because

believes that when the political hindrance of foreign control is removed and the nation is free, it will be quite possible to liquidate big business and big zamindaris without even a non violent struggle. Ascending taxes and death duties can progressively bring about the desired end. When once the nation has power these things can be done by means of legislation without rousing any great class feelings and class hatred. The recent land and debt redemption measures introduced by some Congress Governments in the provinces amply bear out this contention. But even after the acquisition of political power if vested interests stand in the way the weapon of Satyagraha is always there to be used. Civil resistance for the redress of internal wrongs at the present moment is likely to distract attention from the main anti-imperialist struggle. It will be taken advantage of by the third party to thwart our efforts for political freedom. In whatever light therefore the present policy of Gandhiji may appear there should be no doubt that he wants the national life to be organised on the basis of decentralised agriculture and industry This decentralisation does not exclude co-operative enterprise in both the fields.

Gandhiji is also a believer in the family and in the family morality The institution of the family implies some private property This private property must not however be the fruit of exploitation. In Gandhiji's scheme everybody must work and even if he is an intellectual worker he must perform some physical labour if not for himself, then for the group

Gandhiji's idea about decentralised industry and agriculture is based upon his conception of the place of material goods and comforts for the higher life. He believes that an amount of material goods is necessary to a

refined, civilised and moral life He has often said that he could carry spirituality to the masses only through bread, through the capacity to satisfy better their physical needs. Thus though he believes that there is an intimate connection between matter and spirit, he feels that material possessions are merely a means, never an end in themselves. Up to a point they are necessary for the advancement of the individual. Any inordinate hankering after them hinders rather than helps growth. Their pursuit for mere sense-enjoyment is harmful. It leads to insatiable and evergrowing desire, passion, love of power and ostentation. Desire and appetite after certain well-defined limits work for the slavery of the individual. This enslavement clouds the memory and warps judgment Desire and appetite are then no more the reactions of a healthy physical life. Instead they rule the body in their own right. Thus the will of the individual is enervated and his personality lost Gandhiji therefore fully believes in the following words of the Geeta which are daily repeated in the Ashram prayer

Man musing o the objects of sense
conceiveth an attachment for thes
from attachment ari eth desire
from desi e anger cometh forth
From ange proceedeth delusion
from delusi confused memory
from conf sed memory destruct o f reason
from destruct o of ea o he perishes.

Therefore, for all healthy social life and proper social equilibrium, not only th desire for but the possession of material goods must be strictly regulated. This can be achieved externally by decentralised commerce and industry and psychologically by an education which

without despising material goods, knows their limitation in terms of the good life. Such an education places no undue emphasis on material life and puts the first things first.

This is as anti-thesis to the material concept of life, in which no limit is put upon the possession and the enjoyment of material objects. The only limit imposed is the physical capacity of the individual. Another limit imposed by socialism and communism is that equal advan tages must be made available to all. The materialist does not distrust physical life or the pleasures derived from the possession and enjoyment of material goods. The cry ever is to level up and after the levelling up is achieved to increase the goods to the fullest capacity that advancing science makes available. The materialist sees no hindrance to higher life in the multiplication of goods and wants. Increased wants are in fact made the measure of culture and civilisation.

As the economic, so the social organisation is to be built upon non violence, truth and justice. What Gandhiji contemplates is a casteless and classless society based upon co-operative service. No variety of physical labour is considered as low or degrading. The humblest work must be performed by the individual for himself, and if need be for others. All work is honourable nay sacred. Every conscientious and honest worker is not merely worthy of his wage but also worthy of respect. There is no hierarchy of classes or castes based upon birth, wealth or profession. There must, however be co-operation and division of labour according to natural and acquired capacities. That this is Gandhiji's conception is proved by his antiuntouchability movement and his prescribing the lowest work, the work of scavenging for himself and his closest

companions. It is also from this point of view that in such conferences and congresses as bear the impress of Gandhiji the work of scavenging is assigned to the highly educated and generally to those who belong to the higher castes. If scavenging is honourable, all work, however humble, is honourable.

In politics the same principles apply. The moral standards in political relations are to be the same as in other social relations. *There are to be no two sets of* morality one in the social and the other in the political *sphere. Good and gentlemanly conduct must be the same* in both the fields. In politics too there must be scrupulous regard for the means employed to achieve a particular end. Means can never be justified by ends. Means are as important as the ends. Sometimes they become even more important. The law of the jungle shall no more apply in political dealings and relations internal or external. Such a result can only be brought about when greed, aggrandisement and exploitation are eliminated from political life. Here too men may not be used as mere tools. Such a conception of society progressively rules out the use of hate and violence in political relations.

(*iii*) THE UNITY OF THE GANDHIAN WAY

Gandhiji has however elaborated no philosophical system of life, logical and complete in itself. Yet all his socio-political plans and activities are organically correlated and integrated. They are based, as we have seen, upon certain fundamental principles and a unity runs through them all. They can neither be cut off from their basic principles nor from each other. In the former case they will be snapped from their living roots and will wither away in course of time. They will degenerate into lifeless dead custom. At the same time if the

principles are accepted and the practical schemes of reform rejected and no substitutes in the light of these principles supplied, the principles will be reduced to empty forms without any substance or content. Again if the practical schemes are worked piece meal and in isolation and there is neither coordination nor correlation, they will lack vitality and the principle of growth.

Recently at a meeting of the A.I.C.C. a radical politician said that a distinction should be made between the creed and the programme of the Congress. According to him there should be no censorship about the belief in the creed, if the programme is accepted and worked. Such a view dissociates the programme from the creed and makes the creed not a living faith which must manifest itself in the life of the individual and the nation but a mere form. Such a view also betrays an utter lack of knowledge of the historical evolution of the Congress in recent times and the place of Gandhiji and his ideology in it. It makes of the Congress a purely political organisation for the liberation of the country from foreign domination. It deprives our movement of its comprehensive revolutionary character. It transforms the struggle into a war of independence, although non-violent. It makes it revolutionary in the narrow and not in the comprehensive sense that the policy and the programme are based upon a distinct ideology that seeks to change the values of life and usher in a new epoch in history. Such a view implies that the political slavery of India is an isolated phenomenon, unrelated or at best not fundamentally related to the life of the nation. Such was the view of the earlier congressmen. They had therefore made it a part of the constitution that

Congress as an organisation did not concern itself with social reform. It was purely and exclusively a political organisation. In those days it was possible to combine political radicalism with social reactionaryism. Many so-called political extremists of the time were very moderate or even reactionary in their social outlook On the other hand many political moderates were radicals in social matters. This was due to life being divided into water tight compartments. It was also due to the fact that the political doctors had not properly diagnosed the real malady from which the country was suffering. It was not the mere accidental loss of political liberty as may happen to any otherwise healthy nation by a combination of adverse circumstances. But it was the enfeeblement of the life spirit of the nation. It was not mere political dependence but a moral spiritual and all round decadence If therefore the nation was to be saved, it could not be done merely by the transference of political power however important that may be. Whatever the nature of the struggle, violent or non-violent, it must be based upon some ideology some revaluation of life values Such a movement would be a spiritual and idealistic movement. Such was the French Revolution and is the present Bolshevik Revolution in contrast to the successful movement for liberation from foreign yoke in many modern countries, like the Netherlands, America, Italy and others. In the former case not only politics but the entire life of the group is affected and transformed and a new epoch begins.

It is such a spiritual revolution that Gandhiji has been trying to work through the Congress. As he works through this organisation he has often to accept its limitations. He takes it as far as its origin and historic

evolution would allow But the effort always is to make the Congress the vessel of this all round transformation.

If such a change is to be effected the nation may not accept the programme and reject the creed the two are intimately and organically connected. Neither may the nation accept one item of the programme and reject another at its sweet will. The different items are parts of one organic whole. Often our politicians have accepted the programme but sought to run away from the full implications of the creed They have taken refuge behind the plea that the Congress has used the words peaceful and legitimate and not non violent and truthful as if peaceful means can ever be violent and falsehood can ever be legitimate.

However here we are not concerned with what portion of Gandhiji's ideas the Congress has accepted but with what Gandiji s ideology stands for We are considering his philosophy of life, social and individual. In that there can be no divorce between the creed and the programme, as the programme is evolved out of the creed. Often we are asked what place have the Charkha, Khadi, Village industries, untouchability in a revolution? Did not countries who had no such programmes attain liberation from foreign domination? It was not necessary for the U.S.A. to give up slavery to drive away the British. Neither did the Netherlands give up the Black trade to free themselves from Spain. Why should there be removal of untouchability and the emancipation of women? Did not women in the past work under many handicaps when national liberty was achieved? Do they not still suffer from many disabilities under democratic national governments? These are logical

arguments. However the struggle that seeks to remain non-military and non violent and eschews untruth and falsehood, *may not have a double set of moral values*, one for social and another for political intercourse. It must therefore first seek to do justice before it can claim the moral right to fight external injustice with weapons of truth and non violence.

Truth and non violence are not in Gandhiji's scheme mere religious forms or dogmas. They have to be woven into the life and activity of the nation. They must be mobilised, organised and disciplined if they are to be substitutes for armed might. The armies of Satyagraha must be trained. They must learn habits of co-operation in order to non-cooperate effectively with evil. Military strategy has its fields of training. These are wars of aggression, frontier raids and air bombing, espionage, diplomacy bluff and bluster. The training grounds for the Satyagrahis are the various constructive and the so-called reformist programmes of Gandhiji. If these programmes were not there and they did not train the Satyagrahis in discipline, organisation, command and obedience, in short in all social and civic virtues, critics may have some justification to consider non-violence as the principle of the vegetable kingdom. As it is Satyagraha is far more active and dynamic than the principle that rules in the brute world and the jungle. It is therefore that Gandhiji always insists that non violence is not for the weak and the cowardly but for the brave and the strong. For him it is the most active force in life.

The basic principles therefore may not be separated from the programme. It is however possible that

principles of truth and non violence may work as effectively through other external programmes. Spiritual principles cannot be confined to or canalised through one set of external institutions. It is quite possible, that a mind as great as or a greater than Gandhiji s may embody the principle in different institutions and schemes of reform. But till more suitable methods of canalising these principles are discovered, suggested and worked out, Gandhiji's programmes of practical work must hold the field.

Not only have the uncritical made a distinction between the creed and the programmes but they have often sought artificially to dissociate the latter from each other and accepted one programme and rejected the other Nay they have dissected and divided the various programmes and accepted one part and rejected the other For instance many political workers accept Khadi as the national symbol and uniform some accept it as symbolical of simplicity and identification with the masses. They reject its economic implications. They fail to understand that the essence of Khadi lies in Gandhiji s conception of economic self sufficiency for the villager in two of his primary necessities of life, food and clothing. To fail to understand that Khadi is introduced as a subsidiary industry for the villager to remove his forced idleness and consequent unemployment, for good part of the year is to miss its significance in the life of the nation. Take away the basic economic idea and Khadi will fail to be the nation s uniform for long. It will fail to be India s symbol of identification with the masses. Its place may be taken up by the scythe and the hammer or some such symbols as are significant in their own way The Charkha is on our flag and khadi is on our body as the national

uniform, because they have meaning and significance in our nationl economy as conceived by Gandhiji.

This about khadi. Removal of untouchability must also be no mere political weapon. It must be approached, in the spirit in which Gandhiji wants it to be approached, in non violence, truth and justice. If it is tackled merely from the narrow political view point, it may add one more communal problem to the many that already disgrace the land. It is therefore that Gandhiji lays as much stress upon temple entry and the internal reform of the Harijans as on the removal of their economic and political disabilities.

Again the Hindu-Muslim question has to be approached not as the politicians would have us do in terms of percentages and quotas, nor even merely in terms of mass contact measured by the number of Muslim primary members on the Congress register good as that is. Many of the Mussalmans whom we draw in the Congress lose their caste, however religious and learned they may be. The mass contact that Gandhiji wants, is to be evolved by daily and hourly service rendered by the members of the majority community to the members of the minority community in truth and justice, and not in a political bargaining spirit. There are deep-seated and historical causes for distrust and suspicion. These cannot be removed by percentages and pacts nor even by enrolment as Congress members. If the Mussalmans are invited to join the Congress only through the door of membership, before their deep-seated doubts and suspicions are removed, they may in course of time become a problem there, which would be worse than their being a problem outside the organisation. Gandhiji's approach to the problem therefore appears to be the only sane approach

today and he derives it from his basic principles of non violence and truth.

Then there are the problems of the kisans and the industrial labourers. These may not be approached in the spirit of class-hatred and class-war When we propose to solve even the greatest conflict of foreign rule with weapons of non violence and truth, how can we seek to solve our internal conflicts with any other weapons? If we attempt to solve them by violence we shall merely be playing into hands of the foreigner economically and politically It is believed that foreign influence and intervention are at the root of the terrible prolongation of the civil war in Spain.* Here the foreign influence in the shape of British Imperialism is much more entrenched than is the case with Spain The foreigner can therefore very effectively exploit our class conflicts and passions. The resultant chaos will be a hundred times more terrible and disastrous than in Spain It is strange that any sensible patriot or lover of humanity should talk in such terms today But the tragedy is that some idealists are so much obsessed with their theories and are so impatient, that they count the cost in human misery and suffering as little as did the pious Fathers of the Christian Church in Mediaeval times, when they burnt at the stake witches, heretics and sometimes even undoubted saints belonging to their own fraternity The present counterparts of these priests believe that they are saving the soul of humanity from exploitation, capitalism and imperialism, which after all are more destructive than any carnage that may result from restoring the balance. They therefore think that it is cowardly to count the cost in human woe and suffering

* 1938.

even if it be of those whom they wish to save. Who can argue against such Divine Wrath? Its advocates are often enough as pure in motive and as holy as were the Church Fathers. Verily the way to hell is paved with good intentions. Even so, one may be induced to be more modest about human judgement and consequently less inclined to violence After all if one's judgment happens to be wrong and if one is non violent one only injures oneself

So far then, as Gandhiji's scheme of life and reforms is concerned, the question of the kisans and the industrial labourers must also be tackled by methods evolved from his basic principles of non-violence, truth and justice. For India, situated as it is today this is also the most practical and factual approach.

Thus we have shown, that not only is there intimate relation between the creed and the programmes but the programmes are organically inter related and inter connected. Nay the separate items of the programme are a unity in themselves. They cannot be dissected or sub-divided arbitrarily and one part accepted and the other part rejected. The programmes are to be accepted in their inter relation and are not to be cut off from their roots in the basic principles of the creed.

This unity in principle, and the unity that runs through his concrete schemes and plans, makes Gandhiji's programme a single whole. It makes of it a complete system of philosophy with its distinct ideology This ideology is revolutionary in its character Its dynamic and revolutionary element is often missed by superficial hostile critics, who are deceived by the creed of non-violence Violence is not of the essence of a

revolution. What is of the essence is the new set of values based upon some principles of life, what the spiritualist would call the eternal verities of life The word eternal, to the modern mind, may sound unscientific. But even the scientific socialists, the Marxists and the Bolshevists though they may deny the eternal character of non-violence, may not deny that the principles of truth and justice, embodied in whatever changing forms and institutions, are eternal principles and are at the basis of all social intercourse as we know it among humans on this planet.

Given the principles the programme what is further necessary for a successful revolution is a dynamic personality which, as it were, is the embodiment of the principles. Revolutions are not accomplished by the device of counting votes nor by *front popularis* but by forging straight ahead under determined leadership which counts no cost as too great in the service of the ideal. The fundamental principles with their programmes and personality being given, the theoretical success of a revolution is assured. Practical success will depend upon the combination of a hundred and one favourable circumstances and even accidents, and the proper utiliza tion of opportunities that may not repeat themselves

Gandhiji s scheme of life lacks neither basic principles nor a programme, nor again the living dynamic personality It is perhaps therefore that however unpractical and out of tune with the times some of his schemes may appear they have a strange vitality Revolutions after all are not based upon crude so-called facts and reality The reality that revolutions take account of, is not mere physical external reality To be effectively real it must include and embrace imagination,

enthusiasm faith, foresight and many other psychical and moral realities. For instance what would remain of the Bolshevik revolution if the reality contemplated by Lenin and his followers lacked imagination, fervour enthusiasm, faith and foresight?

Gandhiji's is therefore a complete revolutionary philosophy based upon facts and reality No part hangs loose. It is due to this that in spite of its want of a theoretical system it attracts people fired with missionary zeal and enthusiasm, and those whose grasp of reality includes a bright and burning faith and an indomitable will. It is this aspect that the Indian liberal and the socialist fail to grasp The latter is surprised at the vitality that Gandhiji's philosophy manifests and the hold it has upon the masses. Even his apparent want of logic succeeds Why because Gandhiji is ever ready to sacrifice consistency and formal logic in favour of dynamic and revolutionary logic. The man who once declared that it was a sin to go to the councils, not only advocated council entry but acceptance of office. What strange inconsistency but what foresight and grasp of the real and the factual! And how quick he is! As soon as the ministries ar installed in their places he is ready with his schemes, complete prohibition in three years a brand new scheme of education. The radicals were not ready with any schemes of their own. They had therefore to fall in line, whatever their views, about prohibition and education.

Let the radicals and socialists therefore once for all realise that it is not ancient worn-out wisdom that they have to oppose, nor is it social and political reaction, nor again is it liberal dilettantism and decadence. What they have to oppose is a revolution, a living and work-

faith, of which Gandhiji is the embodiment. Let them also know that they cannot at their sweet will cut off items of the programme and graft them on to other ideologies. They cannot have an ounce of non violence and dilute it with a bucketful of Bolshevism Such a procedure will not work. It will fail They cannot, for instance, talk of non violence and encourage peasant agitation and industrial strife of the Western type, on the specious plea that strife already exists and it is not of their creation. If they really believe in non violence, even as a policy they will have to work it out faithfully uninfluenced by other ideologies which cannot fit in with non violence. They will have to find points of contact between capital and labour peasant and landlord, and exhaust all possibilities of peaceful settlement before they can advocate even a non violent struggle. They cannot have Gandhiji s principles and tack them on to Marxism. The socialists may not know it, but their advocacy of non violence, always sounds hollow as if taken up for convenience. Often enough in private conversation and public meetings they are betrayed into advocating or excusing violence. After all every sane politician admits that for India today the question of violence has only a theoretical importance. Why does it then crop up every now and then in their private and public utterances? Because non violence does not fit in with the rest of their ideology Even though they wear khadi to make themselves politically respectable, khadi sits loose on them. They may not talk of village industries. They can never be enthusiastic about these. They may for want of a device of their own accept Basic Education but they will so mutilate it that it will not work. Let them know that such opportunist conformity

will not strengthen their own ideology or programme but will be demoralising, if not for the leaders, surely for the rank and file Let them also realise that in the world today there are two distinct ideologies and two revolutionary principles, the one adovcated by Gandhiji and the other derived from Marx and worked out by the Bolshevists. These two ideologies are separated by an unbridgeable gulf. They are based upon diametrically opposite moralities and philosophies of life. What is good in the one is not so in the other What is praise worthy in the one is blameworthy in the other Gandhiji is a force of progress and peace in the world according to one view According to the other he stands consciously or unconsciously for reaction and exploitation of the underdog. He is the friend of the bourgeois, the capitalists, the zamindar and the Indian princes. It is useless to miss the difference. It does no good to any party to misunderstand the full implication of each others philosophy It is all right to talk of unity and *front populaire* But if a dynamic programme, a revolution of the one sort or the other has got to be carried out it cannot be done by divided counsels, differing ideologies, conflicting loyalties and loose organisation.

Then let every man live upto his faith. Let every party work out its own programme. If there is conflict it is inevitable and unavoidable. After all if one party is pledged to non-violence, we may not witness the internecine war that raged some time back in China and that rages and tears Spain today Non violence has evolved a peculiar strategy to meet such situations They were met successfully in the past. They can be similarly met today without a civil war Therefor there

is no great danger if one ideology is allowed to try its hand at national regeneration unhampered. After all the aim of Gandhiji and the Marxists is the same, namely freedom from exploitation of all sorts. The difference arises in the means and the principles of life that the two hold by If there is conflict let that be a friendly rivalry But then such rivalry can only de based upon truth and non violence Can the Marxists accept the necessary change in their faith? If they can, they may not after all find much difference between themselves and Gandhiji They will not only understand and appreciate his programme better but will fall in line with his plans and thus help to introduce in India, a socialism that is wedded to principles of truth and non violence, which after all appear to be more in keeping with the genius of the Indian people than conflict war and violence Non violence and truth are also the greatest need of humanity today

So we have seen that Gandhiji's philosophy is based upon certain principles. In the light of these principles he has evolved a comprehensive and connected programme of fight and constructive work for the guidance of the individual and the nation. The principles and programmes are organically connected. They form one whole. They need from the individual and the nation a particular character In the light of this character is conceived the new system of education Beginning with truth and non violence in political life Gandhiji has evolved his schemes of Chrakha and khadi, removal of untouchability Hindu Muslim unity emancipation of women, (not in the Western sense on the basis of equal opportunities for the enjoyment of physical life, but equal opportunities for social service and individual advance

through it), the revival and the introduction of new village industries. From these he has proceeded on to his new scheme of education. Education has come late. Naturally, for education must follow practice. But it is there for the sake of all that has preceded, for the sake of the entire scheme of life. It is to prepare the growing child for the place he will occupy in the future in this just and moral society free from all exploitation. It is for the formation of his character in the light of the requirements of such a society. It is the coping-stone of Gandhiji's socio-political edifice.

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